

Chapter One

Harry stood before Voldemort, the final day had come. Two weeks after the Hogwarts Massacre, ten days since the Order of the Phoenix had been obliterated, Five days since Harry had put his last friend and ally in a grave, nearly twenty one years since his first defeat of Voldemort as a baby.

Voldemort was elated, at long last he was about to kill Harry Potter, the man that had caused him so much trouble and stopped him at every turn. But now it was his turn, a few light wizards still existed scattered around the world in rebel groups. None however were here to help Harry Potter the famous Boy-Who-Lived.

They were standing on a pile of rubble, the bricks of which had once formed the famed Ministry of Magic. Surrounding them was a circle of at least five hundred Death Eaters.

Voldemort was resplendent in blood red robes that matched his cruel eyes. Harry was opposite him, he had long since changed the look of his face to avoid attention. His scar was gone, the lucky result of an extremely painful procedure, his face was narrower than it had been previously, his features were sharper giving a new face entirely.

His eyes were a strange mix between dark blacky green with flecks of red with amber, Harry's black hair was longer reaching his muscled shoulders and tied back in a loose tail flicked through with red streaks. He was dressed in ripped and worn black jeans and a dirty plum jumper, clutched in hand was a wand, he didn't know who it once belonged to but he had found it on the battle fields after his own wand had been destroyed, it was simple and black and at the same time an tremendously powerful item undoubtedly a speciality item for some rich wizard. A black sword was strapped to his side covered in dry blood.

'It's time,' Voldemort smirked 'for Harry Potter to take his final bow, or should I call you Anton Lukyen as you've taken to being called?'

Harry held his wand defiantly in front of him 'you will never win Voldemort!'

Voldemort raised his hands up high and laughed 'but I've already won, you are of no more concern to me, in fact I don't think I'll even lower myself to killing you.'

Harry glared at Voldemort and gripped his wand every more tightly 'What then?'

he asked 'am I just stuck in this Hell forever?'

'Oh no.' Voldemort sneered 'I think I'll have Wormtail kill you, after all he did make all of this possible' he gestured to the body strewn ground with a twist of his lips 'forward Wormtail and serve your master!'

Pettigrew strutted forward with his wand held out in front of him.

'It will be an honour My Lord' he simpered 'to be allowed to kill the last pure light wizard.'

Harry held his wand up to match Pettigrew's 'to the death it then' he muttered 'after all, what's left for me to live for?'

'Nothing,' laughed Voldemort cruelly 'which is why you need to die, oh and Anton your elemental magic won't work here, so don't even bother trying.'

Wormtail and Harry circled each other with Harry limping slightly in pain from previous wounds. Wormtail held a similar black wand to Harry's and he brandished it with unskilled grace.

'Avada Kedavra!' he screamed.

'Avada Kedavra!' Harry screamed at the same time, he had long since abandoned the Expelliarmus spell, times had changed and enemies were safer dead.

The two beams of green light smashed into each other with colossal force, the spells intertwined creating a ray of golden light that connected the two wands. Thousands of golden threads of light

surrounded the two fighters creating a dome. Harry felt himself being lifted from the floor at the same time Wormtail rose into the air.

A laugh burst from Harry's mouth in surprise 'Priori Incantatem' he laughed bitterly 'Priori bloody Incantatem! What's the chance of that?'

Wormtail's own face was contorted with fear as he gripped his wand with the silvery hand.

'My Lord!' he shouted 'what should I do?'

An answering curse flew towards Harry as Voldemort screamed 'Crucio!'

The curse smashed into Harry's chest, instead of incapacitating him however, the curse shattered the time turner that hung from Harry's neck. A silvery glow burst from it, screaming through the air, it encased Harry completely. More of the silvery glow leaked down the golden beam of light, it reached Wormtail who was desperately trying to break the connection, it enclosed the traitor just as it had done Harry.

A loud scream came through the air and Harry felt himself falling, the scene of destruction was gone, only blackness remained and he fell through it unsure of what was happening he could dimly hear Wormtail's petrified screams in the distance.

Swirling colours spun around Harry and a new landscape came into view, remains of the Ministry were gone, instead it stood glorious and whole. The Death Eaters were gone as well as Voldemort, they were standing on the street outside the building and the sun was bright in the sky, Wizards and Witches in colourful robes came running out of the building to see what had caused the almighty crash.

Harry ignored them and concentrated on Wormtail who still held his own wand tight in his hand.

'It looks like magic isn't going to cut it!' he shouted drawing his blade out and twirling it in a threatening manner 'how about physical combat?'

Wormtail screamed as he recognised were they were 'Take me back!' he shouted 'Take me back to the Dark Lord!'

Harry heard gasps as they recognised the supposedly dead man confessing his loyalty to Voldemort.

'What's the matter Peter?' mocked Harry 'unable to kill me without the protection of your Death Eaters?'

Wormtail screamed again and pulled a dagger out 'I will kill you!' he promised 'just like I helped kill your parents!'

Harry stormed towards him raising his blade.

'Just like I helped kill everyone you ever cared about! Your friends and family I will help Voldemort kill again just like I gave up Lily and James, I will give up you!' taunted Wormtail desperately, loudly enough for the whole crowd to hear.

'Not if I kill you first!' Harry said lunging towards him 'to pay for every light wizard you helped slay!'

He swung the blade at Wormtail, the rat managed to avoid the cutting edge as he darted out of Harry's reach. The ministry officials were pulling out their own wands, but moments too late. Harry swung again with his sword and this time the blade sank into Wormtail's neck. Wormtail's eyes went glassy and his outstretched hand fell empty, he sank to the floor still with the look of shock on his face.

600 miles away the Wormtail from this time was scurrying around in his rat form in a rough tunnel, a rock fell from above and impaled the man, the narrowness of the cave prevented the body from reverting to human, so it remained a rat. A chance accident that concealed the fact there were two Wormtail's.

Fate Had Dealt Their Hand.

Harry yanked the blade back out, he dropped it to his side limply as the he felt a strange dizziness overcome him, looking down he saw

Wormtail's knife sticking out of his side and the blood soaking through his jumper. The sword fell out of his numb hand and hit the ground with a clatter.

People were shouting and voices were calling to each other, Harry sank to his knees and grasped the hilt of the knife with his other hand, he began to slowly pull the blade out. It was almost a third out when a hand yanked his own off the handle, Harry didn't have the energy to protest he looked up to see the face of Mad-Eye Moody and his swivelling eye.

'Stop pulling it!' he instructed gruffly 'you'll only end up causing more damage.'

Harry tried to focus in on the Auror he had seen being blown off of his broom after his sixth year.

'Is he dead?' Harry choked out painfully.

'Yes,' Mad-Eye answered without turning round 'what's your name?'

'Anton,' Harry lied gasping slightly 'Anton Lukyen.'

Mad-Eye opened his mouth to say something else but Harry was too busy concentrating on the blackness edging his vision, he tried to stay awake but the numbness was spreading completely through his blood. He fell backwards onto the ground and blinking slowly he let the blackness take him.

Chapter Two

From now on Harry from the Future will be called Anton, younger Harry will remain as Harry in order to get rid of confusion.

Brightness leaked in under Anton's closed eyes, he came into awareness slowly and groggily. Anton kept his eyes closed as he tried to work out where he was, there was softness underneath him, the softness that he hadn't felt for a while of a bed. He shifted his arm slightly and felt the pull of wires attached to them. The complete numbness had gone, it was replaced with a dull ache instead that throbbed throughout his entire body.

'I think he's waking up' someone said quietly.

'About bloody time,' the voice he recognised as Mad-Eye said 'I thought he'd be out for good the rate he was going.'

Anton cracked open his eyes but closed them quickly as the light hurt his eyes, letting out a slight groan he opened them again blinking to dispel the pain. He was lying in a hospital bed with clean white sheets connected to clear plastic tubes that were pumping brightly coloured potions into his veins, this was a method only used in emergency conditions where a constant stream of potions needed to be administered, they were sealed magically and were much more effective than their muggle counterparts. Anton lifted one of his arms slowly and rubbed his eyes roughly noticing immediately the clean light blue pyjamas he was dressed in.

After he dropped his arm back to his side he gazed warily around the small white room he was in. A chair was positioned next to the bed with the recognisable figure of Remus Lupin sitting in it watching him carefully, Anton cast the image of Lupin having the Dementor's kiss forced on him out of his mind. Leaning against the doorframe was Moody who was staring at Anton intently.

'Where am I?' Anton croaked out his throat dry and sore.

'You are at St Mungo's,' answered Lupin leaning forward to look more closely at Anton 'recovering from serious injuries.'

'I'll tell Dumbledore he's woken up,' Mad-Eye said to Lupin not looking at Anton 'he'll want to be here.'

Mad-Eye pushed off from the door frame and clunked from the room Anton looked back at Lupin trying not to display the shock on his face 'it wasn't that serious,' he grimaced 'the bastard only stabbed me.'

'He stabbed you with a blade laced with Gildras poison,' Lupin said concern obvious on his face 'when it entered your already depleted immune system it rapidly spread through your blood deadening everything, if the antidote,' he gestured to a bright purple wire 'hadn't been administered in the twenty minute period after infection you would have died.'

Anton shifted his body slightly 'that's probably about the luckiest thing I've had happen to me in a while.' he muttered.

'Getting stabbed?' Lupin said amazed.

'No,' Anton coughed 'someone recognising the poison.'

'We nearly didn't.' a voice said from the doorway, Anton glanced up to see his formally deceased headmaster standing in front of him in green robes 'If Severus hadn't been close by...' he paused studying Anton closely 'you were mere minutes away from succumbing to the poison.'

'Who are you?' Anton asked hoarsely pretending not to know the people he had watched die years before, or as it was years to come.

'I apologise Mr Lukyen,' Dumbledore said stepping into the room 'I am Professor Albus Dumbledore of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry and this, is Remus Lupin.'

'Call me Anton, Mr Lukyen sounds to much like my father,' lied Anton wincing slightly 'how long have I been here?'

'You arrived on the 10th June.' Dumbledore replied 'however you have been unconscious for nine days so that makes it June 19th 1996'

1996 that made it seven years earlier than were he had been, six years before the ending of the light world but just after the events of the Triwizard Tournament.

'May I ask you Anton,' Dumbledore said 'just how you came to be battling Peter Pettigrew outside the Ministry of Magic?'

'We weren't there at first,' Anton said gasping slightly as he twisted the truth 'we were in a forest somewhere, I was fighting him there, our wands connected. Priori Incantatem. And then I was outside your ministry.'

'How did you come to be fighting Peter,' Lupin asked keenly 'I thought he was keeping his presence a secret from the world.'

'My family had been fighting the Dark Wizards in Eastern Europe,' Anton coughed again 'we were trying to escape but they kept finding us, in the end it was only my brother and I.' Anton thought sadly to Ron, the last wizard that had fought by his side and the closest thing he had ever felt to a brother.

'What happened to him?' Dumbledore asked softly.

'We were apparating from country to country in the hope they wouldn't find us' (at least this part was the truth) 'my brother went outside to get wood for the fire and they were waiting, I buried my brother and searched for those who had killed him, the last of our once large group.'

'There were lots of you?' Lupin asked gently.

'A fair number,' Anton nodded thinking back to the once great number of wizards 'but they picked us off one by one, and now only I'm the only one left.'

A tear ran down his cheek and Anton made no move to stop it 'what have I got still to do?'

'The cause is still there?' Dumbledore said firmly 'you still want to defeat Voldemort?'

'For my family, yes,' Anton said honestly 'I will fight him with every breath I have left.'

'Anton have you anywhere to stay?' Dumbledore asked concerned 'anyone you know in Britain?'

Anton shook his head 'I don't have anything.'

'Then I would like to invite you to stay at the Headquarters of the Order of the Phoenix' Dumbledore said 'in return we are asking you to join us.'

'The what?' Anton asked trying to look nonplussed.

'I'm sorry' Dumbledore said 'that was rude of me, the Order of the Phoenix was set up to fight Voldemort, now he has returned we have important jobs to fulfil.'

'Help you fight Voldemort,' Anton said pretending to think it over while internally rejoicing at the prospect 'I would be honoured to accept, though won't people mind me staying at the headquarters?' Anton asked thinking carefully of the fact none of them actually knew him.

'Fawkes trusts you,' Dumbledore said simply 'he gave a few of his tears to help to begin your healing.'

'And Sirius Black would be the one honoured for you to stay there,' Lupin said quickly 'by revealing the truth about Wormtail you helped clear his name.'

Anton nodded stiffly and let another yawn escape from his mouth, he watched the two men carefully making sure they noticed the slight drooping to his eyes. Without fail they both looked at each other before turning back to Anton.

'We'll leave you now,' Dumbledore said 'you are obviously tired, we will return later.'

'Take care of yourself,' Lupin said sincerely 'I'll be sure to tell Sirius you're awake, he wants to thank you.'

Anton yawned out a muffled thanks to the two men and watched them vacate his room, as Dumbledore was exiting he turned back and looked at Anton a look of curiosity on his face.

'May I ask,' he said 'how old you are Anton?'

'Twenty two in a month' Anton replied not seeing the point of lying, after all he bore no close resemblance to what he should have looked like at twenty two even his scent had been altered. Where at one point many said he was the spitting image of his father, now if they stood side by side the relationship would not be so obvious.

'Twenty two' repeated Dumbledore 'young indeed to fight so readily'

'I've been fighting all my life,' Anton said letting his eyes sag close.

Listening he heard the door snap closed and silence fell on the small room, wasting no time Anton flicked his eyes open and sat up flinching in pain as his body protested to the harsh treatment, as soon as he was sitting up straight he pulled the wires out of his arms with quick ease. There were about ten or eleven tubes and as Anton removed them small trickles of blood ran down his arms from the wounds they had made, which would have been avoided with a simple finite. Potion leaked out of the ends splattering onto the clean white floor.

His wand was on the cupboard next to him along with his jeans and jumper, which had been cleaned. His sword was no where in sight, moving quickly in case a healer decided to visit, Anton removed the pyjamas and replaced them with the clothes, next to the cupboard were his worn dragon hide boots which he yanked on gritting his teeth to dull the pain. When he was dressed he pushed himself awkwardly off the bed, the moment he was standing his legs gave

way almost immediately reminding him of just how long he'd been in bed. Seething quietly Anton used the bed to pull himself back onto his feet, as soon as he was standing he staggered towards the door and jerked it open.

Outside, the door other closed doors signalled private rooms along a wide corridor, muttering and laughing could be heard in a couple of the rooms. Anton ignored them and limped down the hallway occasionally using the wall to keep him upright, halfway down a tray of potions stood unattended. Anton studied them carefully until he recognised Pepper up Potion, grabbing the vial he downed it in one swallow, the potion gave immediate relief wiping away the cobwebs that were fogging his head, it also helped him walk in a straighter more up-right line.

Anton kept walking, as he passed another room a thick black travelling cloak hung from a hook, he grabbed it quickly and yanked the heavy hood up to cover his face. Pulling the cloak more tightly around him, Anton kept his head down as a middle aged female Healer hurried past him.

'Nine days,' she was muttering 'when he eventually decides to wake up I'm on another floor.'

At the end of the corridor was a set a wooden double door's that led onto a landing, opposite Anton another set of wooden doors headed in the opposite direction behind which an open ward was visible. A large staircase rose up to the landing and another staircase led up to the floor above. On the wall in-between pictures of smiling Healer's a floor guide was attached to the wall, it read:-

YOU ARE ON THE THIRD FLOOR

ARTEFACT ACCIDENTS.....Ground Floor

Cauldron explosion, wand backfiring, broom

crashes, etc.

CREATURE INDUCED INJURIES.....First Floor

Bites, stings, burns, embedded spines, etc.

MAGICAL BUGS.....Second Floor

Contagious maladies, e.g. dragon pox,

vanishing sickness, scrofunglus, etc.

POTION AND PLANT POISONING.....Third Floor (You are here)

Rashes, regurgitation, uncontrollable

giggling, imminent death, etc.

SPELL DAMAGE.....Fourth Floor

Unliftable jinxes, hexes, incorrectly

applied charms, etc.

VISITORS TEAROOM/ HOSPITAL SHOP.....Fifth Floor

IF YOU ARE UNSURE WHERE TO GO, INCAPABLE OF NORMAL SPEECH OR UNABLE TO REMEMBER WHY YOU ARE HERE, OUR WELCOMEWITCH WILL BE PLEASED TO HELP.

Anton studied the sign for a moment trying to find out what floor he was on, as soon as he saw the THIRD FLOOR he turned to the stairs and began his downwards descent. Down the corridor he heard the Healer scream out something unintelligible, other Healer's came running from the opposite corridor heading towards the screams. Anton darted quickly down the steps as fast as his body would allow and headed to the ground floor. As he reached the next landing and started on the next flight of steps a couple of security guards ran up the stairs barrelling past Anton shouting into commu globes.

'He's gone,' one called 'Healer Rowley found his bed empty! He's dressed in jeans and a jumper and he's injured.'

Anton didn't hear anymore of the conversation as they passed him barely giving him a second glance and hurried on, Anton pulled the cloak even further around him self-consciously in case they noticed him. He tugged the hood ever further to cover his face and next to ran down the next few flights of stairs. As he reached the First Floor the familiar tones of Lupin and Dumbledore came to his ears as they headed back up, Anton looked around the landing he was standing on and spotted an open door, he darted through the door which was an empty treatment room.

'Where the Hell has he gone?' Lupin said anxiously 'surely he'd know that it was suicidal to venture out so quickly after waking up!'

'That's assuming he walked out on his own violation,' Dumbledore answered 'but he has to be here somewhere, he can't just get out without anyone noticing.'

They passed the room Anton was hidden in and continued up the stairs following the security guards. When they had passed Anton exited the room and hurried down the remaining flight of steps to the ground floor. On the ground floor a bored looking witch was sitting at a desk attempting to distinguish what a hysterical wizard with an elephant's trunk in the place of a nose was babbling about.

Anton slipped past the desk and security guards that were talking intently to each other, they cast an uninterested look at Anton as he strode through reception and out of the doors, the fact he was wearing a cloak ruled him out as the missing patient. He left the hospital to arrive in an entrance to a grubby shop with a dummy in the window. It was a muggle street and the hospital had taken the form of a red brick department store named Purge & Dowse Ltd.

A young mother pulled her child to the opposite side of the street at the sight of Anton and his sinister facade. He quickly pulled the cloak off and carried it slung over his shoulder to reduce the amount of attention he was getting.

As soon as he had got out of sight of St Mungo's Anton attempted to get his bearings, the landmarks were no longer ruined monuments

but instead stood tall and intact. Shoppers breezed down the crowded muggle streets clinging to bags and chastening their shopping partners who were not so eager to be out.

Anton tentatively worked his way through the thronging masses aiming for the Leaky Cauldron, which was assumedly reverted to one piece. After about half an hour of painfully jarring walking, the memorable sight of the pub came into view, Anton nearly ran across the busy main road in anticipation of seeing the magical hub in all its glory.

Upon entering the Leaky Cauldron he replaced the cloak and hood and kept his head down, Anton went directly through the smoke filled room and into the back courtyard. Withdrawing his wand he tapped the required bricks and waited for the entrance to open. When it did it greeted Anton with every scent colour and emotion he thought he'd never experience again, unable to contain it, a huge grin flashed across his face. Almost skipping with joy he joined the colourful horde and headed to Gringrotts.

As he stepped into the marble bank the coolness of the air wafted over him, a relief from the stifling heat of the outside. A goblin looked up from her work and glared at Anton.

'Next,' she snarled waiting for Anton to step forward, when he did she inflicted another piercing gaze upon him and said 'Bank Number?'

'That may be a problem,' Anton answered noticing immediately her distrustful gaze 'I am here to claim a Time Account under the name of Anton Lukyen.'

'And you would be?' she asked.

'Anton Lukyen,' he replied calmly 'is there a problem?'

'No problem,' she sneered 'you'll be needing Fablemine' she gestured to another Goblin with her finger he approached nervously.

'Take him to Fablemine,' she ordered 'matter of a Time Account.'

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The Goblin led Anton out of the atrium and through a hallway to an office, he knocked at the door hesitantly.

'Yes?' came a voice from within.

'Anton Lukyen,' he said quickly 'Time Account.'

'Come in then,' instructed the voice evenly.

The Goblin stood back and gestured Anton to enter the room, at the office's large black marble desk another Goblin was perched on a chair, he watched Anton carefully as he entered before clicking his fingers and summoning a piece of parchment.

'Mr Lukyen,' he said dryly 'are you lying claim to this Time Account?'

Anton nodded swiftly before asking 'I trust this is in confidence?'

'Nothing you say will leave these walls,' Fablemine said looking at his parchment 'By claiming this account, you are reducing the amount that will be present in the future for yourself. As I am aware this is your account which you managed to set up in the future.'

'Future me doesn't mind,' Anton replied with a small smile 'how much is in the account now?'

'When you set up the account and made it available to your past and future selves, you decreed 8 million galleons to the fund, as I am sure you are aware.'

Anton nodded.

'However it is now worth 500 000 galleons,' the Goblin looked up to gauge Anton's reaction.

'How,' Anton said shocked 'did I lose 750 000 galleons by going back seven years?'

‘What inflates must in turn deflate,’ Fablemine said steadily ‘the dramatic reduction is the result of the huge inflation we are forecast to have next year.’

‘So that’s all I have?’ Anton asked dejectedly, he had been hoping for more even if he had set the account up without realising it would be in the past the money would be put to use, Anton was just glad that when the Goblin had asked him if he’d wanted a Time Account he’d said yes.

‘Yes My Lukyen, though many may see that as substantial,’ Fablemine summoned another sheet of parchment ‘now what type of account would you like the money transferred to? We haven’t set up Time Accounts yet so the money cannot remain in one.’

Anton left the bank with his wallet considerably heavier than it had been previously, heading down Diagon Alley he headed for a shop he had once been well acquainted with, the shop was called ‘Master Gerninhil’s Combat Clothes’ What you failed to comprehend on reading the sign, you soon picked up on when entering the fairly well lit store.

At the front of the store shelves lined the walls along with clothes rails, on top of which different clothes were labelled in order of, Strength, Endurance and Freedom. A small changing room was at one side with curtain to conceal the occupant.

At the back of the store the more practical side lay, including wand holsters, stun grenades etc. no one below the age of twenty was allowed in the shop regardless of the fact the legal age was seventeen.

Anton studied the shelves before picking what he’d wanted all along, the highest calibre of all three specifications. First he grabbed a pair of dark jeans, then a black long sleeved top and new dragon hide boots, he finished it off with a new cloak, the cloak was lighter than the one he had stolen and the blackness had a tinge of red to it. The

cloak also came with inbuilt shield that guarded from basic spells and hexes and was usefully fire resistant.

Anton went into the changing room and stripped out of his old clothes, underneath, his side was swathed in bandages but creeping out were purplish veins, a not so subtle reminder of the severity of the poison. Tattoo's were inscribed onto his well toned arms (one didn't survive where he came from by being unfit), they were ancient runes of protection, at the top of his arms they met at his shoulders and snaked down his back reaching into the small of his spine where they ended with a ball of fire.

His body protested painfully as he stretched it out gently and pulled on the new clothes, every so many minutes a painful twinge would shoot through his body leaving him gasping. When he was ready and dressed he pulled a couple of items from his old jean pockets, a small brown compass and a hair tie. Using the tie he dragged his hair into a ponytail and shoved the compass and wallet into his new pocket. He studied himself in the mirror taking in his pale drawn face and tired eyes, he had lost weight over the past fortnight and his already lean, athletic form was thinner. Yet he still cast a formidable presence, the fact that in the few years after leaving Hogwarts he had become proficient in martial arts and weapon fighting.

From the back of the store he commandeered a wand holster and a lumos flare. After paying the amount of 190 galleons to the proprietor he left the shop and rejoined the crowd.

A newsagent's had a shelf full of papers outside its window, Anton stopped and sifted through the display looking for the Daily Prophet, when he had located the paper he purchased it and looked closely at the front page. Emblazoned on the front was a large moving picture of Wormtail dodging out of the way of Anton's blade, beneath the title screamed.

You-Knows-Who's Loyal Servant Uncovered!

It went on to detail Wormtail's betrayal of the Potter's and the clearing of Sirius Blacks name, it also however to Anton's disgust had included his name within the text as well as a description- but luckily

no photograph, the paper described him as a 'mysterious saviour' which at least made him smile.

The Daily Prophet had decided to continue its slander of Harry Potter 'The-Boy-Who-Lived' even with Pettigrew's loud proclamation that Voldemort existed, it seemed the magical world was unwilling to accept it. Whatever happened though, Anton was determined that this year would end significantly different than the first time he'd lived it.

The news that Anton had inexplicably disappeared was still unreported, which was something to be grateful for however part of the article detailed what had happened afterwards a small section read:-

Mr Lukyen, is still recovering in a private room at St Mungo's Hospital, his condition was said to be serious but stable. The Daily Prophet is able to reveal exclusively that the man named Anton Lukyen is in a comatose condition that Healers are worried he will never wake from.

Anton almost laughed out loud at this, never mind not waking up he had left the hospital within half an hour of waking.

Suddenly another editorial caught his eye he studied it carefully the caption announced:-

Peculiar happenings in the Forests of Albania- Louis Mort reports

Ministry Officials have been studying the forests after wizards living in the area recently complained of dark-magic surrounding the place.

On arrival the Officials were unable to discover the source of these magical level's, one top representative announced the possibility of residual energy left over from when He-Who-Must-Not-Be-Named existed in non-corporeal form.

Why though would the dark-magic effect the surrounding villages years after?

A sudden influx of dark-magic meant only one thing- a sudden increase of dark wizards in the forest. Anton dropped the paper into the bin next to him and narrowed his eyes thinking hard, Voldemort was obviously hiding in the Albanian Forests, which meant the real Pettigrew couldn't be far behind.

Anton felt in his pocket and pulled out the worn brown compass that was concealed there, flicking open the lid he tapped his wand on the gold dial and muttered Peter Pettigrew.

The compass only showed where dead bodies were to be found, in this instance the dial spun in one direction and smoky lettering rose from the dial.

Ministry of Magic, London was plainly visible, which obviously indicated the Pettigrew he had killed. Just as he was about to shut the lid, the needle spun again, this time facing the opposite direction.

Albanian Cave swirled out, this could mean only one thing, both Pettigrew's were dead.

The single thing Anton had left to do was to conceal the body wherever it was, stepping forward he disappeared to the location the compass had indicated.

Chapter Three

When Anton arrived in the Albanian forest, he was brought to the entrance of a small cave. It was a dark night with the tall trees blocking the moonlight from filtering down, Anton listened to see if he could hear anything, when only silence greeted his ears he ducked into the cave and adjusted his eyes to brighten in the dark. In the future were it was dark every hour of the day, it had been a necessary extra to have his eyes manipulated to see in the dark and to see the traces of magical signatures, and it was a decision he never regretted.

Inside the dank cave was a small space that Anton could hunch in while he studied the walls. The entire wall of the cave had tiny tunnels burrowed into it, each was about 10cm in diameter and crawling with rats.

Anton pulled his wand out and pointed it at the wall.

‘Accio’ Anton muttered flicking his wand,

nothing happened for a few minutes until quite suddenly a dead rat came shooting out one of the tunnels, it was rotting and blood covered with bugs crawling all over with it. Anton pulled the compass out and searched for Peter, this time the compass signalled that Pettigrew was straight in front of him.

Anton channelled his energy and summoned a ball of fire in his hand, the fire burned in a hot ball lighting the cave with an intense glow. Anton thrust the fireball at the

rat, the rat ignited with the flames and burned hotly for about 30 seconds, when the flame died down the only thing that was left was of the traitor was a cremated husk.

Shouts sounded in the distance and lights flared through the forest.

‘I saw fire!’ came a shout ‘over there!’

Anton cursed under his breath and clicking his fingers he vanished the remains before sticking his head out of the cave, outside a group of people were blasting trees out of their way with wands. Anton shoved his own wand in its holster and crawled out of the cave, this time instead of just summoning a small portion of fire Anton surpassed his previous effort.

He placed his hands together and slowly drew them apart, in between his hands a sphere of fire grew with every centimetre he separated his hands. When the glittering inferno had reached roughly a metre in width he hurled it towards the voices and disappeared in the noise that followed the fireballs explosion against a patch of trees.

He apparated back to London, with the reasoning that if he went anywhere he might as well go near the people who were the most dedicated to the downfall of Voldemort. Anton landed just outside the Leaky Cauldron and pushing the door open he strolled into the pub desperate for a meal and a hot shower.

'What can I help you with?' Tom the barman asked smiling as Anton approached the bar.

'If you've got a spare room for the night I'll take it,' Anton answered 'and a firewhisky would be appreciated.'

'I reckon I've got both of them' Tom answered pulling a glass off a shelf and filling it with a shot of whisky 'rooms to be paid in advance 3 galleons per night, 4 if you want breakfast'

Anton pulled his wallet from his pocket and counted out the required amount for the barman 'can I play how many nights I'm staying by ear?' he asked.

'Eye ye can,' Tom said carefully 'but if you cause any problems you'll only be welcome the one.'

'Understandable,' Anton acknowledged 'but I doubt I'll be the one to cause trouble.'

Tom handed a large key to Anton and slid the firewhisky in front of him

‘That’ll be a room for the night and 5 sickles for the drink’ he said holding out his hand.

Anton dropped thirteen galleons into the expectant hand and picking up the drink he downed it in one swallow, placing the empty glass on the counter he pushed away and limped slightly to the stairs, the pain that had been building back up only slightly numbed by the alcohol.

The clock next to the stairs displayed the time to be half ten, the bar was still packed and amid the noise Anton’s presence had hopefully gone unnoticed.

Upon entering his room Anton only had the energy to pull his boots off, sighing at the rawness of his body Anton dropped back onto the four-poster bed and slipped quickly into a dreamless sleep.

The next morning pulled Anton groggily and painfully awake, the ache that had originated from his side was now a throbbing burn. Anton pulled himself out of the comfort of the bed and stumbled into the bathroom slowly shedding his clothes as he went.

Stepping under the heat of the water soothed Anton’s aching head, and it was only then he dared to look down at his side. Pulling the waterlogged bandage off he surveyed the wound in surprise, where the knife had entered was a deep gash the colour of which was inky black. The veins that had extended from it had become tinged with the dark blackness.

Anton made a face of disgust at the lesion before averting his gaze, instead he focused on getting completely clean, the warmth of the water making him sigh in delight. When he stepped out of the shower exactly five minutes later he ignored the towels at the side and as an alternative summoned fire to dance under his skin warming it pleasantly and evaporating the water droplets hanging on his skin.

After scourging his clothes Anton pulled them on and headed downstairs for some breakfast. The Leaky Cauldron was already full by the time he arrived, the early shoppers were passing through and the other guests were already shovelling food down their throats. Anton ordered his own breakfast and sat down at a vacant table, a paper had been left on it and Anton picked it up curiously to read the headline.

Patient walks out of St Mungo's Unnoticed in Serious Condition!

Anton groaned out loud at this and tugging his hood further over his face he scanned the article:-

A patient that the hospital has refused to identify yesterday walked out of a private ward only minutes after waking up from a deep coma!

We question why exactly patients in serious conditions are not monitored more closely, if one can walk away from the third floor what exactly is stopping those that pose a risk to themselves and to others?

Though St Mungo's refused to comment our inside source told us that the patient is rumoured to be 'Anton Lukyen' Lukyen was recently hurt when...

It carried on to repeat what it had said the day before, Anton folded the paper up ignoring the section that read 'maybe Mr Potter should pay a visit to St Mungo's to help explain his delusions.'

Anton looked up to see his food arriving, he quickly ate the fried breakfast and left the pub with his body feeling properly fed for the first time in ages.

Next though he had a problem, if he entered any apothecary to obtain pain relief he risked the possibility of being recognised. Biting the bullet Anton stood up from his table and left the Leaky Cauldron to arrive back in Diagon Alley.

It was a Saturday morning so it was busy with shopper's, young children that had not yet left for Hogwarts were being shepherded around by parents with the promises of ice cream if they were good.

Anton weaved in and out of the jostling crowds unsure of the layout of some of the less familiar shops, eventually the sign he had been searching for made itself known.

Amrahan's Apothecary

Harry ducked into the dingy shop and mentally adjusted his eyes to the gloom, there was a man standing behind the till watching him closely with a curl of distrust in his lip.

'Can I help you?' he asked waspishly.

'I'm hoping you can,' Anton replied 'I'm looking for simple pain relief potion.'

'Pain relief.' repeated the man turning to the bottle lined shelves 'do you want pain relief or pain blocking? Though pain blocking can be more volatile.'

'I'll have the pain relief,' Anton said pulling out his wallet 'medium strength please.'

'I'll give you Lavacion potion,' the shopkeeper said pulling a small red bottle down from a shelf 'its fast acting and effective.'

'How much?' Anton asked calmly.

'Nine sickles,' the man replied placing the bottle in a brown paper.

Anton handed the amount over without question and after receiving the potion he left the shop to stand once again in the warm sun. The uncomfortable thing about wearing a cloak in the summer was the fact that it was unpleasantly hot, Anton pulled the cork of the bottle and took a swig of the potion.

It burnt his mouth on contact, a vile stinging flavour that tasted foully like ash. Forcing the revolting concoction down Anton retched slightly in disgust.

The only positive thing about the Lavacion potion was that it did ease the pain he was suffering, with his mouth still smarting he started walking towards Knockturn Alley and the shady customers that haunted the area.

Anton swept down the narrow alleyway ignoring the witches and wizards who were selling cheap rubbish from trays.

'A sickle a pack!' a witch shouted steeping in front of Anton 'just a sickle!'

'Not interested,' Anton replied trying to get past her 'now move!'

Before Anton could get rid of the grubby little witch she shot out a filthy hand and shoved a dirty cloth into Anton's hand, before he had time even to blink the familiar pull of a portkey tugged at his navel and he vanished from Knockturn Alley leaving behind a very pleased Death Eater.

Anton landed in a lane with a thump, it was an empty dirt track road with no sign of modern day life. He turned round searching for anything that would tell him where he was, Anton cursed the witch under his breath, and then cursed himself at his own stupidity to allow a dark witch to get so close.

'You're supposed to be an expert' he berated himself quietly 'what a genius to get tricked so damn quickly!'

Anton concentrated on trying to dissaperate but found something was blocking his power. Anton immediately switched into full alert as his situation became painfully apparent, this was no usual occurrence and he was in danger.

He was waiting barely a second when the land around him became filled with Death Eaters portkeying in. Anton pulled his wand from its holster and dropped into a battle stance as one of the Death Eaters stepped forward.

There were about twenty of them give or take and they all had their wands out, bad odds but not as bad as he'd previously faced and escaped from. Ignoring the pain in his body he geared himself up to fight. The Death Eater that had moved forward began speaking in a cold voice.

'Anton Lukyen, you have been identified as having strong powers' he said his eyes glinting at Anton through his mask 'we are giving you a chance to join the side of the Dark Lord and serve under him in the coming battle.'

'And if I refuse?' Anton asked calmly shifting his weight to centre himself.

'You will be killed,' the Death Eater replied smoothly 'you will never have this chance again, so I advise you to do the right thing.'

'The right thing,' pondered Anton 'and in who's opinion is it right?'

'The Dark Lords,' another Death Eater barked 'so you'd better decide soon as we're getting tired of waiting.'

'In that case,' Anton said conjuring fire in his spare hand 'I choose the wrong way, it seems to suit me more.'

Anton hurled the ball of fire at a Death Eater setting their robes on fire instantly, the other Death Eaters all started to raise their own wands and attempt to curse Anton. Anton dodged beams of spells as quickly as possible while throwing as many of his own silent curses back at the Death Eaters with his wand, at the same time he summoned fire ball after fire ball, throwing these with remarkable speed and accuracy.

A smashing sound echoed through the battle scene and other wizards apparated onto the road as the wards fell. Anton recognised

them immediately as the Order of the Phoenix, they joined the fray with their own wands held high. Anton focused on his own battle, a Death Eater was duelling with him, now the others had been distracted it was a much more even footing.

‘Incendio!’ the person yelled.

The spell hit Anton who hadn’t even bothered blocking it, the fire licked around Anton but didn’t burn him. As the Death Eater was staring shocked at Anton, he used the opportunity to launch his own attack, throwing off his cloak he slammed a cutting hex into the person’s arm bringing them screaming to the ground. As the individual pushed himself back up Anton threw a bone breaking curse into their neck, it snapped instantly but the man remained breathing, if he didn’t move there was a chance he could be saved.

Anton turned back to the rest of the fight, a lot of the Death Eaters had fled the scene leaving their comrades to the mercy of the light wizards. One Death Eater was starting to shout a curse his wand aimed at the back of Sirius Black. Anton’s heart constricted as he recognised his Godfather, without stopping to think Anton summoned a large ball of fire and hurled it as hard as possible at the Death Eater. The fire ball smashed into the Death Eater knocking him off his feet and throwing him at least thirty feet to land in a heap.

The moment the fire had left Anton the pain had thundered back at least five times more powerful than it had ever been, the sudden blow sent him falling to his knees. The rest of the Death Eaters had either been incapacitated or killed, Anton put his hand to the searing pain in his side, when he drew his hand back it was coated with blood so dark it was tinged with black.

‘Shit’ he said in a conversational voice, people were rushing towards him with Sirius at the front.

Before they reached Anton he felt the darkness drawing him in and sucking his energy.

The next thing he was aware of was being slumped on the hard ground with someone applying hard pressure to his side. He was

feeling and seeing everything with a detached sensation, Sirius was next to him calling to him worriedly.

‘Anton, don’t die!’ he commanded his voice highlighting his panic

Dying, that was an old concept to Anton, he didn’t feel like he was about to die, but then again if Sirius’s and the others faces were anything to go by, it appeared that he was very close to dying. Anton felt a laugh of disbelief fall out of his mouth, the laugh turned to coughing, a coughing which racked his whole body painfully. The coughing stole his breath and left him gasping painfully for air, people were shouting in alarm and Anton felt a tug of a portkey, he fell into blackness without the energy to stay awake.

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The pain was there the moment the blackness set him free, there was no freedom from it. Anton was somewhere but he didn’t know where, his eyes were clenched tightly shut against the pain little things were digging into his arms that felt remarkably like the tubes he had in his arms earlier. Anton moved his hand less than a centimetre and the small movement sent blinding white pain through his head, he gasped roughly at the pain, his breathing was rough and ragged as if the effort was a step too far.

‘Anton,’ a voice said softly from somewhere by his ear ‘can you tell me what hurts?’

‘Ev...ery...th.i...ng h...h...urts’ he whispered painfully not moving as much as possible.

‘I need more pain relief,’ the voice said full of authority to someone else ‘this is ridiculous, he shouldn’t be in this much pain!’

‘Anton,’ the voice said once again close to him ‘are you allergic to anything?’

When Anton didn’t answer the voice said more sharply ‘Anton! Answer me, are you allergic to anything?’

'R..oo...t o...of n...n...n' Anton trailed off as tiredness tempted him with unconsciousness.

'Stay awake!' the voice said shouting slightly and bringing Anton back slightly from the darkness 'What are you allergic to? Root of what? Come ON! Root of What?'

'Ni..gh.t...in...dr...a..d.e' Anton groaned out with the pain still bursting through his body, white hot lances of pain.

A hand grabbed one of the tubes he could feel digging into his arm and pulled it out roughly, Anton cried out as it jarred his body.

'We've been pumping that potion into him for twenty minutes,' another voice said nervously 'its main ingredient is the Root of Nightindrade.'

'I know that!' the main voice said annoyed 'get me a bezoer...'

Anton slipped back into unconsciousness welcoming the painlessness of it.

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'Wakey wakey!' sang a voice into his ear 'time to wake up!'

'Sirius!' that was Lupin's voice 'he needs rest not you hounding him.'

'It's been ages,' Sirius moaned loud enough for Anton to hear 'how am I supposed to thank somebody for giving me my life back, it they look like they're about to leave their own!'

'He's not dying anytime soon,' Lupin chastened him 'just very ill.'

'He was out for nine days last time,' Sirius grumbled loudly 'how long are we meant to wait this time?'

'You heard what Healer Rowley said,' Lupin said tiredly as if they'd had this conversation before 'first he has to wake up from the coma like state and then he'll need lots of rest afterwards to recover.'

Anton listened with interest to the conversation, at least he'd changed something this time. Sirius had been declared a free man when he was still alive. He shifted and was this time rewarded to no stabbing pains.

'Wakey wakey!' Sirius sang again but with less enthusiasm.

'He's not going to wake up just because you're singing,' Lupin laughed 'though that could be enough to scare him awake.'

'Or frighten me to death,' Anton said loudly causing somebody to crash into something in surprise, he opened his eyes slowly to see Sirius picking up a tray off the floor looking embarrassed. Anton stifled down the look of joy that was threatening to creep onto his face and instead looked expectantly at the two men.

'Let me guess,' he said flickering his eyes around the white room 'St Mungo's?'

'I think you arrived this time with even worse injuries than last time,' Lupin said seriously 'you were even closer to dying this time than last time.'

Anton couldn't help the smile that spread across his features 'I should keep a record,' he joked his voice weak 'I've lost count of the amount of time I've nearly died.'

'You stopped breathing,' Sirius said sitting back in a spare chair next to Lupin his face grim 'twice!'

'And then you nearly died because of the Root of Nightindrade,' Lupin added unsmiling 'it started shutting your body down.'

Anton looked down at his body, it was once again dressed in blue pyjamas, the number of tubes that had been pressed into his arms had almost doubled in number, each channelling bright colours into his blood. Lifting one of his arms it felt heavy and unresponsive, Anton poked one of the wires untrustingly.

'I wouldn't do that if I were you,' Lupin warned 'those potions are keeping you from reverting to the mess you were, I don't think the Healer's would be to happy if you dislodged something.'

Anton dropped his hand back to his side and looked at the two marauder's closely 'How much pain relief am I under?' he asked suspiciously.

'You've got enough in you supply the whole of Hogwarts for a year,' Sirius answered a small smile reaching his eyes 'but when they bring you of it, all of that lovely pain is going to come flooding back.'

Anton groaned and dropped his head back in his pillow 'how long have I been here this time?' he yawned.

'Four days,' Lupin said quietly 'and that yawn had better not be one of your creations because it's not working if it is.'

'We're gonna stay here and make sure you don't run away again,' Sirius said grabbing a grape from the side of Anton's bed.

'I didn't run away,' Anton said trying to be convincing 'I had something important to do!'

'Just think though,' Sirius said smirking 'if you hadn't left you probably wouldn't be stuck here now.'

'Is that supposed make me feel better?' Anton said stifling another yawn.

'No it's the annoying truth,' Sirius replied 'you should get some sleep you're on your last leg.'

'I think I just might,' Anton agreed sinking back into the comfort of the pillows 'though I don't see why you both have to stay here.'

'We're not taking any chances this time,' Lupin said firmly 'you look harmless, but I'm learning there's more to you than meets the eye.'

You don't know,' Anton thought to himself 'just how true you are.'

Chapter Four

When Anton next woke up the room was in darkness, the only light was the faint light coming from the hall outside his room and a low glow from a lamp next to him. A clock was on the wall, it told Anton it was two in the morning. The sound of murmuring was leaking in from just outside the door and laughing brought Anton back into the present.

The pain relief dosage must have been still high because Anton was feeling lethargic and heavy without so much as a twinge of pain from his side.

So here he was, seven years in the past with his younger self receiving grief at every turn. It was probably only about a week until Hogwarts broke up for the summer.

Anton stretched his arms out to loosen up the joints, almost immediately a small whining alarm sounded next to him. The door opened and Sirius and Tonks hurried in, when they saw that Anton was not attempting to leave they relaxed considerably.

'Well look who's woken up again' Sirius said flicking his wand at the alarm to shut it off.

'What the hell was that for?' Anton asked indignantly 'I do not need to be monitored like a child!'

'Aww is little Anton getting upset' Sirius teased smiling at the annoyance on Anton's face.

'And anyway' Tonks joined in 'you're not getting monitored like a child, you're getting monitored like an adult who can't act responsibly and who risks his life, just think if you get yourself killed we may lose out on a really good fighter.'

'Gee thanks,' Anton said still annoyed 'It's nice to know that my life is valued, you haven't got a load of aurors hidden somewhere have you?.'

Sirius and Tonks exchanged small smiles before looking back Anton.

'What?' he asked.

'We've got a few aurors hanging in the wings, they'll be more than happy to jump in and help including Tonks here.' Sirius laughed.

'Funny,' Anton said scathingly, he was feeling miserable because he was in a situation he couldn't see a way out of 'so when do I get out of here?'

A look of disbelief crossed over both Sirius's and Tonks's face.

'You'll be here for at least a week,' Sirius said 'and after that you'll need about a fortnight to recover even further.'

'I don't believe it,' Anton said disgusted 'I kill Wormtail and you keep me hostage in a damned hospital.'

'You revealing Wormtail is something I'll always be grateful for,' Sirius said quietly 'it's the fact you've helped me so much that makes me determined to help you.'

'Can you help me by letting me the hell out of here?' Anton asked hopefully.

Sirius laughed 'not a chance Anton, I'm helping you by making sure you stay here.'

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The next morning when Anton woke up again a Healer bustled into the room, Anton immediately remembered her to be the Healer that had gone into his room after he had left it.

'I am Healer Rowley,' she announced drawing her wand and waving it over Anton 'I would advise you do not attempt another disappearing act, the repercussions could be deadly.'

'I'm already under a close eye,' Anton said irritably 'I suppose you're going to turn off some of these things,' he gestured at the tubes in his arms, there were about twenty of them all coming from a large white object a bit like a large box.

'Turning some down,' the Healer said sternly 'not off, that would take you back to the start.'

'Brilliant,' Anton muttered under his breath.

'I'll ignore that as you're about to be reintroduced to your pain,' the Healer said smartly 'I do however have to change the dressing on your wound and check it.'

She pulled up the t-shirt part of Anton's pyjamas far enough so she could see the bandage that had been strapped there, she clicked her fingers and a tray zoomed in with all necessary equipment on it. Pulling a chair closer to Anton's side she sat down so she was the right height and slowly began peeling the bandage off.

Anton watched the entire thing with a disgusted interest, the wound when it was displayed was back to the purple colour it had been, the inky blackness was gone. The veins were still there though looking pretty nasty, Healer Rowley picked up a vial from the tray and pulled the stopper off with an ominous pop.

'Do I really need any more of that crap?' Anton asked dismayed 'surely there's enough being pumped into me!'

'Allow me to know how to do my job!' the Healer said her patience cracking slightly.

She poked the wound mercilessly with meticulous fingers, every so often she would tip some of the purple liquid into the wound which made the wound weep.

'What's that for,' Anton asked unable to help himself.

'This,' Rowley said pouring some more 'is the antidote to the Gildras potion you were infected with.'

'I thought you'd got rid of that,' Anton said surprised.

'We would have,' Healer Rowley replied 'if you hadn't gone off all of a sudden it would be almost healed by now.'

Anton didn't say anything in answer to this he just hunched down in his mass of pillows and contented himself with glaring at the Healer's head.

Twenty minutes later she had declared everything to be done regarding the wound, placing a new bandage over the injury she stood up and watched as Anton pulled his top back down to cover not only his wound but the bruised area that fell over his muscled stomach, the bruises were rapidly turning into dark purple and they covered at least half of his chest.

'I'll be back tonight to check on everything,' she said walking over to the white box, tapping her wand on the lid it popped up to display clear packs of potions all attached to the tubes, leaning over it she adjusted the nozzle's power on a couple to slow the speed down. She locked the box back up and taking the tray she left the room.

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And so continued the system for the next five days, in-between the Healer coming to change his bandage and adjust his potion measures other people came to see guard him and talk to him, he had been told it was to make sure no Death Eaters tried to get to him but Anton knew fine well they were making sure he didn't leave. He had met a large number of Order of the Phoenix and most were more than willing to tell him what was happening in the world of Dark Wizards, which was a surprisingly large amount. Lupin had already told him that Dumbledore was waiting until Anton was feeling better before he spoke to him again.

Sirius had been right about one thing though, the pain. After Healer Rowley had reduced some of the potions Anton realised just how much pain they had been suppressing, he also found that he was tiring quite quickly compared to what he was used to. At first he had

thought it was solely to do with the poison, however Healer Rowley had been only too happy to tell him that his lack of energy was to do with his body recuperating from long term sleep neglect and pushing it to far for long periods at a time.

On the sixth day Anton was feeling he would go mad if they didn't let him go soon enough, when Sirius and Lupin entered his room he was in jeans and a plain hoody, his legs were hanging over one side of the single bed and his head was hanging over the other side staring at the wall upside down, he still had about fifteen tubes stuck in his arms and he was getting more and more impatient about taking them out.

'Hi,' he greeted the two men sitting up and swivelling round to see them making sure he didn't strangle himself with the tubes.

'Anton!' Sirius said loudly as he walked through the door.

'What?' Anton asked suspiciously.

'How would you like to get out this place,' Sirius asked watching Anton closely for a reaction.

'You're serious!' Anton said 'really serious, I can get out of this hellhole?'

'Under one condition,' Lupin said as Healer Rowley followed them into the room.

'Which is?' Anton said his elation decreasing as he looked for the catch.

'You need to stay with someone while you're still recovering.' Rowley said.

'And that someone would be me,' Sirius said 'and of course everyone else that's staying at my house which includes Remus and the Weasley's.'

Anton's shoulder's visibly drooped, this meant he wouldn't be given a chance to get back into action straight away, he'd have everyone watching him to make sure he was okay.

Healer Rowley looked from Sirius to Lupin before deciding that Remus looked the more trust worthy one 'he needs to take each of these potions everyday and night,' she instructed handing the werewolf a box 'for at least a month maybe more, then he needs a different potion for his lack of natural immunity that developed as a side effect of the poison.'

'I'm not a child,' Anton said exasperated 'I do not need to be mollycoddled!'

They ignored him completely and the Healer handed Sirius a list 'he needs to get at least fifteen hours sleep a day in this next week. If he gets the whole 105 hours for that week after that he can go down to ten but preferably twelve hours a night. You also need to make sure he keeps a healthy diet going and doesn't do any taxing work for the next fortnight. I've written it all down, and hopefully he'll make a full recovery.'

'Bloody Brilliant,' Anton said standing up and gesturing to the potion tubes he was attached to 'now can we go?'

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They left the room a short while later with Anton next to jumping up and down with relief, it was noticed by Lupin and Sirius that Healer Rowley was also looking thankful that Anton was finally going.

'How are we travelling to the headquarters?' Anton asked switching into concentration mode.

'Dumbledore's done a Portkey to take us straight to my house,' Sirius answered pulling out a pair of scissors from his robe pocket 'we should be safe doing that.'

'We should be,' Anton repeated under his breath 'that fills me with confidence you know.'

When they were standing on the Third Floor landing, Lupin, Sirius and Anton all held onto the scissors and Lupin tapped them with his wand activating them.

The bottom dropped out of the world and when they next met solid ground it was to arrive on the steps outside 12 Grimmauld Place. Sirius held out the bit of paper and told Anton to read it.

‘The Headquarters of the Order of the Phoenix may be found at number twelve, Grimmauld Place, London.’

When the house appeared Anton waited for Lupin to knock on the door before following him through into the familiar presence of the Black House. The gas lights flickered on displaying the painfully memorable peeling wallpaper, threadbare carpet and wonky portraits. A light was on in the kitchen and Sirius and Lupin herded Anton in that direction, before he could open the door it was thrown open and a beaming Mrs Weasley stood in the doorway with a cooking ladle in her hand.

‘Hello dear,’ she said to Anton pulling him bodily into the kitchen ‘I’m Molly Weasley.’ she pushed him into a chair opposite Mr Weasley who gave Anton a big smile as well.

‘Um Hi Mrs Weasley,’ Anton managed to get out before she set a plate in front of him and began heaping it with Spaghetti Bolognese.

‘Call me Molly dear every one does,’ she said heaping ever more on his plate ‘my goodness you’re skin and bones,’ she cried ‘I know you’ve been ill but you need to put some weight on!’

Anton stared in shock as Mrs Weasley fussed over him, he had almost forgotten just how nice the Weasley’s were, he had never forgiven himself when they had been killed and neither had Ron and Ginny, no one else had been left of the family to feel guilty.

‘See,’ Sirius said in a stage whisper to Lupin ‘he is being Mollycoddled!’

Before Anton could think up a comeback Mrs Weasley rounded on the two men and forced more of her cooking on them, but not before relieving Lupin and Sirius of the potions and instructions, she studied them carefully taking in all of Healer Rowley's instructions.

'How many hours of sleep has he had?' she asked the two men over Anton's head.

Anton growled in frustration, no matter what he did they all were determined to treat him like a sickly child.

'We spoke to Healer Rowley earlier,' Sirius said ignoring Anton's snarl of annoyance 'she said he had ten hours from midnight to this morning.'

'So he needs fifteen from twelve to twelve,' Molly said studying the paper, she eventually turned back to Anton 'you need an early night tonight' she said in a tone that commanded obedience.

'But,' Anton began to protest.

'Terms of the agreement,' Lupin said 'We're in charge of making sure you're well again soon, its no use if your ill and we need immediate backup.'

His tact had worked instantly, there was nothing Anton wanted to do more than to help the war effort and Lupin knew it.

'Early night it is then,' Anton said shovelling some of the hot food into his mouth 'but I still can't understand why you insist on treating me like a kid.'

'I have a boy your age,' Molly said filling his plate even more 'and I would treat Charlie in exactly the same way if he'd been hurt!'

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'So what now,' Anton asked when they'd all finished eating.

'You need to rest,' Lupin said sipping some of his tea.

Anton pulled a face 'I'm going to bed early why do I need to rest now?'

'It all helps,' Sirius said putting his fork down 'that was lovely Molly' he said politely.

'Yes Dear very nice,' Mr Weasley said picking up his paper and standing up from the table 'I'll see you tonight, I have to get back to work.'

'Be careful,' Mrs Weasley said looking worried.

When he had gone Anton opened his mouth to say something else but Sirius cut him off.

'I mean it Anton,' he said in a voice that was frightfully convincing as stern 'every time you do something stupid you reawaken the poison still in your blood and then you know what happens.'

'So what am I supposed to do?' Anton asked.

'You can keep me company,' Molly Weasley said clearing up the plates 'I'm making the beds for when the children get here.'

'He can't...' Sirius began to say but stopped at Molly's face.

'I know he can't,' she said 'but he won't be, I'll be doing it Anton'll just be keeping me company.'

When Sirius looked suitably humble and he turned to Lupin and asked 'so what time do you want to go?'

'In the next hour,' Lupin replied helping Molly with the dishes 'I need some supplies from Flourish and Bolts.'

'You're going to Diagon Alley,' Anton said 'and I have to stay here!'

'We didn't run away from hospital,' Sirius said 'so we get to go shopping.'

'Is there anything you want?' Lupin asked Anton 'you don't have much.'

'Clothes would be good seeing as I can't go and get them and I've only two tops,' Anton said passing his wallet to Lupin which linked directly to his Gringotts account.

'Any colours you hate?' Sirius asked smirking at the thought of choosing someone else's clothes.'

'Anything bright, really bright,' Anton said shuddering slightly 'way to visible, I like red though.'

'I can see that by your hair,' Molly said studying his hair closely 'I could give it a trim for you it's looking ragged.'

'I haven't had the chance to cut it in over a year,' Anton said gratefully 'but the colours sort of natural.'

'Is it?' Molly said surprised at the black red highlighted hair.

'Yeh like my eyes,' Anton said which was partially the truth, the colour change had been a natural process, the extra's he'd had done were not so natural.

'Well a cut would certainly look better,' she said thoughtfully 'if I could only get my Bill to cut his hair, now that would be an achievement!'

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Lupin and Sirius left soon after with shopping lists from both Anton and Mrs Weasley, then Anton followed Mrs Weasley as she took him to his room.

'Sirius and Lupin did it two days ago with a couple of the others' she said conversationally 'we're doing up a room at a time, so when someone moves into one of the bedrooms Sirius has decided decorate it.'

Compared to the first time Anton had stayed at Grimmauld place this room was different to say the least, three of the walls were cream with the fourth one a deep red. The wooded floor had been polished and a red rug had been paced on it, red curtains hung at the high windows and the four poster bed had a red cover on it, a wooden cupboard stood in corner and a small table was next to the bed and a mirror hung to the wall opposite the bed.

'They didn't do this just because I was coming? Anton asked touched but upset they had gone to so much trouble.

As if realising what he was thinking Mrs Weasley smiled at him and said 'if you're sleeping for fifteen hours, you might as well do it somewhere nice.'

'So Mrs We... Molly' he said smiling 'who are the kids that are coming to stay?'

'Well,' Mrs Weasley said beaming 'there's...'

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When Lupin and Sirius returned three hours later laden down with parcels they were greeted with Molly shushing them.

'He's asleep,' she whispered 'he's to full of restless energy that's his problem, he can't stand to be sitting for more than two minutes.'

'How long has he been asleep?' Lupin asked handing her parcels over.

'Only about twenty minutes,' she answered 'are you taking his parcels up?'

'Yeh,' Sirius replied 'don't worry I won't wake him up.'

'Mind that you don't,' she warned sadly 'what kind life is it for a twenty one year old to spend over a year running from country to country, losing everyone they love along the way?'

'I don't know Molly,' Lupin said sadly 'I only hope I could have that courage.'

'I think he's still running,' she said suddenly.

'What to do you mean?' Sirius asked concerned.

'I think he's been running for so long he can't face staying somewhere more permanently,' she said 'I think it's a subconscious thing, but watch him, every time he gets somewhere new he's looking for somewhere else to go straight away.'

'Survival instincts,' Lupin said 'maybe Dumbledore should wait a bit longer before coming to talk to him about joining the Order properly.'

'I agree,' nodded Sirius 'he needs time to get settled first.'

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Sirius climbed the stairs to the first landing and walked quietly into Anton's room, the boy was lying haphazardly on his bed with half the quilt thrown off, every so often he would groan and shake his head as if trying to clear it of something. Sirius tiptoed over and pulled the quilt back up over Anton, he studied him carefully, he didn't know what it was but something about the mysterious Anton had made him feel strangely paternal or brotherly towards the young Light Wizard.

Dropping the parcels on the chair by the wall Sirius closed the curtains with a flick of his wrist blocking the sunlight out and quietly closed the door on its sleeping occupant.

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Anton woke up less than an hour later with the sun still high in the sky, he rolled out of bed painfully and hobbled to the bathroom for a shower, the pipes clanked noisily but eventually supplied him with warm water. Going back to his room he dried himself while walking and surveyed the items they had bought there were:-

- Five more T-shirts in different subdued colours and styles, along with two dark shirts.
- A pair of black jeans.
- Two new robes, one in plain dark blue and the other a mix between red and black.
- Two sets of new pyjamas one black and one red.
- Plus assorted underwear was added in.

Dressing in the black jeans he pulled on a black t-shirt and his hoody and walked down the stairs looking for a sign of anyone.

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Lupin, Sirius and Molly were in the living room and had been joined by Tonks and Mad-Eye.

'That's only fifty minutes,' Molly said disapprovingly 'so so far he's had ten hours and fifty minutes, he's got to make up just over four hours before midnight.'

'I can really see Anton being keen on that,' Tonks said studying the newspaper in front of her 'you know the fuss he gave that Healer when she suggested he go to sleep at four in the afternoon.'

'He did it though,' Mad-Eye said swigging some drink from his hip-flask 'I can still feel that man's mouth on this bottle.' he said disgusted.

'I'll wash it for you Alastor,' Molly offered 'and Anton only went at four under sufferance.'

'Why what was he threatened with?' Mad-Eye asked 'I was out that day.'

'He was threatened,' Sirius said smiling 'with more fussing if he refused.'

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Anton entered the room and everybody looked at him expectantly, Anton rubbed his head nervously.

'What?' he asked warily 'why are you all staring at me?'

'No reason,' Tonks said dropping her feet off the end of the settee 'come and sit down.'

Anton dropped onto the couch and still looked apprehensively at them,

'Seriously,' he said 'why are you staring at me?'

'You're just self-conscious, that's all,' Sirius said 'now it's five in the afternoon who wants food?'

'You're eating early because you're making me go to bed early,' Anton said looking peeved,

'Doesn't miss a trick this one,' Sirius said smirking 'anyway the kids are coming tomorrow aren't they?' he asked Molly.

'Yes we're picking them up at half past one, why do you fancy coming?'

'No,' Sirius said looking bothered 'but I owe it to Harry to go and meet him even if he can't stay with me at the moment, and say something to his aunt and uncle.'

'You should go,' Lupin said sitting up 'I'll come with you.'

'We'll be there as well,' Mad-Eye said nodding to Tonks 'got to make sure no jumpstart Death Eaters decide to attack him but I'll be incognito.'

Anton was about to ask how such an obvious man could go in disguise but decided against it, after all it had obviously worked in his time round.

'Who's going to stay with Anton then?' Molly said 'he only got out of hospital this morning, we can't all just leave him on his own.'

'You could,' Anton interjected.

'Not a chance,' Sirius said 'you may be an adult but like Molly said you've only just started recovering from a serious illness.'

Anton sat back and let them decide who was stuck with the task of looking after him, after ten minutes of them still going on he asked 'why don't I just come with you?'

'You're supposed to be resting,' Lupin said immediately 'I don't think travelling to a busy muggle station constitutes resting.'

It was eventually decided that Mr Weasley would watch Anton and with that decided they moved onto dinner. They ate it in the kitchen, a quick meal of hot soup with thick crusty bread but Anton couldn't find his appetite so he struggled to force the food down, afterwards Molly Weasley had insisted on him taking the five different types of potion one of which had him gagging over the sink.

Anton contemplated the fact that all the things that were supposed to make him feel better had just made him feel worse and tired.

'Bed,' Molly said half an hour later taking in his red eyes and bags.

'But,' protested Anton 'it's only half seven!'

'We've already had this discussion,' she reminded him 'now you have to go to bed.'

'This is really unfair,' Anton grumbled pushing himself up from the chair he was sitting on 'fifteen hours is extreme.'

'It's only for week,' Lupin said gently 'then you can go later.'

'Sometimes I was lasting on three or four hours a night at a time,' Anton moaned 'I didn't have anyone telling me to go to sleep then.'

'Which is half the reason you're going now,' Sirius said grinning at Anton's disgust.

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Anton trudged up the stairs feeling thoroughly fed up with what was going on, the Weasley's would be arriving tomorrow and his younger self was about to endure a month of the Dursley's not knowing what was going on. Getting annoying letters, being watched every hour of the day, and then being attacked by Dementor's to top it all off.

Anton pulled on the pyjama bottoms but left off the top, crawling into the comfort of his bed he soon dropped off to sleep.

The nightmare sucked him in and before he had chance to stop it he was swimming in a heap of bodies, each mutilated body had the face of one of his friends. The pile pulled him further and further in, until the bodies were almost covering his face, Anton tried desperately to free himself, but the more he struggled the more he was dragged in. Making the mistake he looked at one of the faces and saw Ginny staring blankly back at him her eyes glazed over and bloody, Voldemort was floating above him laughing into the gloom and by his side Wormtail poked his finger into the hole in his neck giggling as he pulled it back out.

Anton woke with a strangled yell sitting straight up in bed, the covers had wrapped themselves around him making him feel like he was still in the pile of bodies. Shivering he thrust them off and pushed himself off the bed to stumble across to the door. Pulling it open the rest of the house lay in darkness, unable to stand the shadows Anton conjured a handful of fire and made his way downstairs, the flickering ball lighting his path.

The large grandfather clock told him the time was well past two in the morning, creeping into the kitchen Anton sat down at the table, he made the ball of fire bigger and then made it hover in the air so it lit the kitchen. Holding out his hand he summoned a glass and a bottle of firewhisky to come zooming from a cupboard shelf. He filled the glass with shaky hands and gulped back the drink in one swallow, the

alcohol stopped him trembling but every time he shut his eyes a face floated past his closed eyes.

An hour and four more glasses later Anton pushed himself up from the chair and cancelling the fire ball he made his way back to his room making sure he didn't wake anyone. The alcohol had numbed his fear and when he fell back asleep it kept him in a deep sleep away from the nightmares.

Mrs Weasley packed her children into the kitchen and started to cook them lunch

'How was your year then?' she asked her four kids.

'Oh fantastic,' George said sarcastically 'in-between people dying, Voldemort coming back and Harry getting treated like a leper it's been great.'

'Yeh,' Fred added 'a real blast.'

'There is no need for that kind of attitude,' she scolded them 'I asked you a question so don't give me any cheek or they'll be trouble.'

Fred and George looked slightly ashamed and they sat down and waited for the food to be done, Ron and Ginny were talking to Sirius and Lupin about what they were going to do all summer. Sirius looked distracted as if his meeting with Harry had left him feeling worse than before, Lupin was also looking unhappy.

They were distracted by Mr Weasley entering into the kitchen and welcoming his children wholeheartedly.

When all eight of them were seated at the table footsteps could be heard getting closer to the door, Ron, Ginny, Fred and George all looked up from their food in interest as the door opened and Anton entered the room still only in his pyjama bottoms, his hair was sticking up in odd places and he was yawning loudly. He'd taken the bandage

off so you could see the purple slash mark that was slowly turning back to pink, the veins were fading and the bruises were yellowing.

'I guess I missed breakfast,' he grinned ignoring the fact all four of them were staring at him, it was definitely strange to see all four of them young and innocent, they were so different from the people they had turned into and it surprised Anton more than he thought it would.

Mrs Weasley was staring at his tattooed arms disapprovingly 'sit down' she told him 'I'll get you some lunch.'

'So how'd it go?' Anton asked Sirius softly.

'Not the best,' Sirius answered truthfully 'he's got to go back to that sick family and there's not a thing we can do about it.'

Anton nodded in understanding and dropped into a spare chair.

'I'm Gred,' one twin announced.

'And I'm Feorge,' the other said staring curiously at Anton.

'Nice to meet you,' Anton said smiling at them 'I'm Anton Lukyen.'

'Wait,' Ron said joining in 'you're that guy from the paper!'

Anton grimaced slightly and said 'I wish they hadn't published my name.'

'If mine got published then yours had to be,' Sirius said livening up 'after all you revealed an evil dark wizard.'

'I should have just pushed him off a cliff,' Anton laughed 'would've been easier and

he wouldn't have stabbed me.'

'He stabbed you!' Ron said 'ouch!'

‘Excuse our brother,’ Fred rolled his eyes at Ron’s childish interest ‘he’s a prat.’

‘Dumbledore’s coming to talk to you today,’ Lupin said pulling out a letter and handing it to Anton ‘he sent a message this morning, he’ll be here at about three this afternoon.’

‘Great,’ Anton said looking at Lupin ‘does this mean I’m joining the Order?’

‘Dumbledore said he was going to ask you, but at the end of the day it’s your choice,’ Lupin answered ‘but whatever happens you won’t be joining in any missions for at least a fortnight.’

Anton groaned again ‘this is getting old’ he muttered.

‘And it’s getting old to say it’s your own fault,’ Sirius said tucking into his own food ‘you’re the one who almost got killed by Death Eaters.’

‘Sirius not in front of the kids,’ reprimanded Molly to the disgust of her children.

‘Mum we’re legal adults,’ George said ‘we should be able to listen to what’s going on!’

‘The less you know, the less danger you’re in,’ Arthur Weasley replied quickly ‘I don’t want any of you putting yourselves in unnecessary harm.’

‘Tell that to Harry,’ Ron said angrily ‘he doesn’t even put himself in the way of danger, it just finds him.’

Molly put a plate in front of Anton and then put the potions next to it, Anton ignored the potions and tucked into the food instead. Mrs Weasley regarded him as if you would a naughty child.

‘And what time were you up last night?’ she asked sternly.

‘What?’ Anton said trying to play dumb.

‘You heard,’ Sirius joined in ‘someone was in the kitchen drinking firewhisky in the middle of the night and it wasn’t any of us.’

Anton mentally cursed himself for leaving the bottle out.

‘The Healer said no alcohol whatsoever until you’re off the potions,’ Lupin said ‘and we don’t even know how much you chose to drink last night.’

‘As I keep saying I am not a child who needs to be supervised,’ Anton said annoyed ‘if I want to have a drink I should be able to have one without getting grief over it.’

‘Death wish,’ one of the twins muttered under their breath and they all concentrated on what they were eating.

‘You say that but you constantly do things that are reckless and stupid,’ Mrs Weasley said drawing herself to her full height ‘you spent years doing God only knows what, you left St Mungo’s within half an hour of waking up! You got into a fight with twenty Death Eaters and nearly died! And you say that you need to be treated like an adult!’

‘I only wanted a drink!’ Anton said indignantly.

‘Well you’re not having another one!’ Sirius said firmly ‘now just drink your potions and eat your food, you keep saying you wanted to be treated like a grown person yet you appear to do everything to oppose it!’

Anton slumped back in the chair miserably and grabbed a piece of bread.

‘It’s only for a fortnight,’ Sirius said in a more gentle tone.

Anton managed to smile and look less irked, as everyone seemed slightly on edge he cast around for something to say ‘So’ he began looking at the twins ‘what’s the most ingenious prank you’ve ever come up with?’

It definitely broke the ice and soon everyone was joining in on the conversation, though none quite as enthusiastically as Sirius who had them all howling with laughter at some of the pranks he had gotten up to during his time at Hogwarts.

An hour later Anton excused himself to get ready and after a quick five minute shower he pulled on jeans and a shirt buttoned over a T-shirt, tying his hair back he went downstairs to await Dumbledore.

Chapter Five

Dumbledore arrived at ten past three in an elaborate set of cobalt robes, after asking Sirius for a quiet word later, he ushered Anton into the sitting room and shut the door behind him to avoid interruption.

‘Anton,’ he began with ‘I’m sure you know why I’m here.’

‘Joining the Order,’ Anton perching on the arm of a chair while Dumbledore seated himself on the opposite chair.

‘That is one of the things I wished to discuss,’ Dumbledore agreed ‘but I also wanted to talk about where you went after you left the hospital.’

Anton looked down at his feet for a moment, he’d been expecting that question to arise.

‘I wanted to make sure one of the murderers wasn’t hurting anyone else?’ he said eventually, making sure the strongest of his mind shields were in place.

‘And were they?’ Dumbledore said softly watching Anton closely with his twinkling blue eyes.

‘They were dead,’ Anton admitted ‘at least a week before I found their remains.’

‘So you didn’t kill the Death Eater,’ Dumbledore said carefully.

‘No,’ Anton said quickly realising what Dumbledore was suggesting ‘it looked like he’d been hit with a heavy object of some sort.’

Dumbledore nodded ‘I also wanted to ask you how long you’ve had the gift of elemental fire magic?’

‘You realised?’ Anton said shocked, elemental magic was very rare and it was even rarer for it to be recognised.

'Oh yes,' Dumbledore said a small smile breaking through 'I recognised you used a lot of fire, but you didn't just harness it, you created it, which can only mean one thing- an elemental, though usually the powers are given to four people not just one.'

'Fire, Wind, Earth and Wind,' Anton said sadly 'gifted to four people, four friends who were united against one force.'

'What happened to them?' Dumbledore asked gently realising this was a sore topic for the man.

'Earth fell first,' Anton said thinking of her green and brown hair, her features like Anton's were adjusted 'they put her body in plain sight, we tried to get her back but it was a trap.' he wavered off.

'And then what?' Dumbledore asked.

'There was no way out, Wind burst a hole in a wall,' Anton's memory's flickered to Ron bursting the wall away his silver hair glinting in the moonlight 'they got Water, it was only later we discovered what happened to her' this time another face came flooding into his mind, her long blondy blue hair surrounding her laughing face engulfed by darkness.

'And Wind?' Dumbledore said finally.

'My brother,' Anton said 'I told you about him, a simple Avada Kedavra was all they could be bothered to spare him.'

'I'm sorry,' Dumbledore said realising the horrible truth to Anton's life 'I'm sorry to bring it all back to you.'

'I don't mind,' Anton said lying slightly 'it's better to remember than forget completely. So what was that you were saying about joining?'

'Would you like to?' Dumbledore said inquisitively.

'Most definitely,' Anton said honestly 'I can't think of anything that would bring me more satisfaction.'

'Well then,' Dumbledore twinkled 'I personally invite you Anton Sasha Lukyen to join the Order of the Phoenix in the battle against Voldemort.'

'So I get to go on the secret missions,' Anton said smiling 'and sit in on the secret meetings.'

'I assure you Anton,' Dumbledore said laughing 'they're not half as exciting as they sound.'

That night was the first meeting that Anton attended under the guise of an innocent light wizard. Most of the Order was there, there were also a few people missing that were yet to join the organization that Anton knew more of in the future. The younger members of the Weasley family were being kept in another room, much to their obvious disgust and Fred and George's muttered curses.

The meeting was held in the basement of Sirius's house, Anton descended the steps with curiosity, he had never seen the room in all its glory having only seen the decimated remains. Chairs were set out in a semi-circle in rows of about five by ten, the other half of the circle was taken up by a small platform behind which the emblem of the Order hung- a glittering phoenix. The walls were taken up by large pieces of paper with diagrams and writing scrawled all over them.

Most of the chairs were already taken and a low murmuring filled the air, quite a few waved and smiled at Anton along with greeting him as a full member, he also knew a lot of them from when they were guarding him at the Hospital. Anton dropped into a seat at the back next to Sirius and Lupin, Sirius was getting rid of some of his boredom by annoying Snape with talking loudly about greasy hair products.

Dumbledore swept into the room five minutes later and stood on the platform, almost immediately the entire room fell silent.

'Good evening,' he said smiling 'and welcome to another meeting of the Order of the Phoenix, I would like to take this moment to welcome

Anton Lukyen as a member, I'm sure he will be a great asset to our cause!

There was a burst of clapping and quite a few smiles among the group. When the noise had died down Dumbledore began speaking again.

'As I am sure you all know,' he said gravely 'Severus recently became accepted back into the Death Eaters.'

'Round of applause for the slimy git,' Sirius whispered to Lupin and Anton with a smile.

'Severus has been able to find out that Voldemort,' a few shudders followed the name 'he found out that Voldemort is trying to find a way to get to Harry at the safety of his home.'

'Some home,' Mrs Weasley bristled and a small number of people added their agreements.

'You know that Harry must remain with his aunt and uncle for his own protection,' Dumbledore said tiredly 'anyway back to the issue at hand, I believe it would be best if we organised a round the clock watch.'

'Can't we just bring him here?' Sirius asked in a slightly mournful voice.

'That is not an option,' Dumbledore said firmly 'in order for the protection to work he must stay at his family's home for at least three weeks.'

'I volunteer for first watch,' Lupin said loudly.

'Second!' Mad-Eye shouted.

'A schedule will be sorted,' Dumbledore announced 'another issue is that we must keep our presence a secret, we cannot take the risk of Voldemort spotting our plan.'

'I'm with Dumbledore's suggestion,' Kingsley said and this followed a greater amount of voices issuing their own agreements.

Anton just sat there, he didn't want to take the risk that he would change something to extreme. The next task was to divide the tasks that people would do over the coming week, Anton was passed over for any physical task and was instead assigned to character profiles of current Death Eaters, a assignment he was told to spend only an hour at a time on, few people were told they would be guarding a door at the Department of Mysteries this was including Sirius and Lupin.

When the meeting eventually finished at eight, a whole two and a half hours since it had begun, Mrs Weasley, Sirius and Lupin ordered Anton to go to bed after enduring the horrendous tastes of the potions. Anton decided to go without much fuss even though the rest of the Order were about to have a meal and the teenagers were also awake. Anton darted up the stairs his mind whirling over all the things he had learnt during the evening, including just how it was decided that he was to be left in the dark at the start of the summer after his fourth year.

As he entered his room he pulled off his clothes and dumped them on the floor pulling on his pyjama bottoms he was about to get into bed when a sudden burst of white light engulfed him, Anton flung his arm over his face shielding his eyes from the intensity, when he removed his arm and opened his eyes he found he was in a different place altogether. Anton gazed around in shock, he was in a white square shaped room there were no windows and no door, the floor, ceilings and walls were all a luminous white.

Anton attempted to draw fire into his hands as his anxiety worsened but no matter how hard he tried he couldn't conjure the flame.

'Come on!' he muttered to himself in panic.

'It won't work here,' a soft voice said from behind him.

Anton jumped and span round on one foot and dropped to a defensive position. On the opposite side of the room a woman stood,

she had an old fashioned simple blue robe on, her long brown hair hung freely around her face and her feet were bare, not one jewel adorned her body. She watched him closely through deep blue eyes, it was impossible to tell her age, one moment she looked young and fresh and the next she would move slightly and her face would age instantly.

'Who are you?' Anton said nervously eyeing up his captor warily.

'I am Fate,' she said simply walking closer to him, her features were calm and tranquil.

'Why am I here then?' Anton asked cautiously his body relaxing slightly as he realised who she was, or rather what she was.

'You are here because you were sent back and now you have to know the rules,' she replied.

'What rules?' Anton said relaxing his body completely 'and who sent me back?'

'Fate sent you back,' she answered 'we were unhappy with how things turned out, we decided to adjust history.'

'You can do that?' Anton said surprised.

'We can do that,' conceded Fate 'and we did do that.'

'What's the catch?' Anton said suspiciously.

'Catch?' Fate said curiously 'Catch is not something we are familiar with, please rephrase your question.'

'What's the snag? What's the drawback?' Anton rearticulated.

'It was not possible to send just you back,' she answered 'we sent another as well, to preserve the time balance.'

'Pettigrew right?' Anton said feeling slightly relieved.

‘Not the rat,’ she stepped closer ‘we had to send someone of equal power from the Dark Side.’

‘Who?’ Anton said fear filling him once more.

‘We cannot say,’ she replied ‘that is for you to discover.’

‘That’s not fair,’ Anton said angrily ‘I deserve to know who we are dealing with!’

‘No you don’t,’ she said ‘we are under no obligation to reveal who we sent back.’

‘Then what else can you tell me?’ Anton asked miserably.

‘We spoke of rules,’ she continued ‘these are your rules.’

‘And if I break them?’ Anton asked.

‘You would be unwise to break these rules,’ she said evenly.

‘you are forbidden from speaking of where you came from, you are forbidden from revealing your true name, you are now only known as Anton Lukyen, you are forbidden from revealing the name of the other time traveller or the names of the people you know in the future, they are known only as the aliases you had in the future. If you attempt to call anyone you knew previously by their original name you will be punished.’

‘Anything else?’ Anton asked sarcastically.

‘You are obliged to fight for the Light Side,’ she said unperturbed ‘all of this is for the greater good to succeed. There is also no place for you in the already changed future, you must live your life in this time.’

‘Is that it?’ Anton said this time more seriously.

‘That is all for now,’ she inclined her head slightly ‘if we believe there is anything else we will summon you.’

'I really appreciate that,' Anton said tiredly.

The woman disappeared in a glow of light leaving Anton on his own in the room. He waited for a few minutes in perfect silence waiting for Fate to take him back, time stretched and Anton found it impossible to say just exactly how long he was kept waiting before they eventually sent him back.

Finally the powerful glow re-enveloped Anton and when it dissipated he found himself back in his room at No. 12 Grimmauld Place, Anton noticed immediately the daylight leaking in through his closed curtains grabbing a clock off the bedside table he realised with shock that it was almost nine in the morning, he had been away for over twelve hours and it felt like he had been awake the entire time.

After standing under the freezing spray of his shower for two minutes Anton still felt drained, he toyed briefly with the idea that he should go back to bed but came to the conclusion that it may look suspicious. Instead he pulled on some jeans and a T-shirt and trekked down the stairs in search of food.

Anton got as far as the bottom of the stairs before the exhaustion caught up with him, he half fell half slid to sit on the last step of the stairwell. Resting his head on the banisters he let his eyes droop closed slightly, it wasn't long before the peaceful silence of the house was broken by footsteps approaching. Anton didn't bother opening his eyes as the footsteps suddenly sped up and a murmured curse fell on Anton's tired ears.

A hand dropped on his shoulder and shook him softly, when Anton didn't open his eyes the shaking got progressively harder.

'Anton wake up!' the owner of the hand commanded.

Anton cracked his eyes open a fraction, after realising it was Lupin doing the shaking he promptly shut them again.

'What happened?' Sirius's voice said urgently and more footsteps hurried towards him.

'I don't know,' Lupin replied worriedly 'when I came into the hall he was just sitting here.'

'Is he supposed to be that pale?' Sirius said tensely.

'Somehow I doubt grey is a healthy shade,' Lupin said uneasily 'we should call a Healer.'

'I'm fine,' Anton managed to mumble out 'just tired.'

'Yeh and I'm the Queen of England,' Sirius said disbelievingly 'we should get him some help.'

'Just sleep,' Anton groaned out his head slumping further down the banister.

'We should get him to bed,' Lupin said grabbing one of Anton's arms and beginning to pull him up.

'Then we should call the hospital,' Sirius suggested taking hold of Anton's other arm 'make sure there isn't something that's gone wrong.'

'I'm not broken!' Anton struggled out.

'Of course not,' Lupin said soothingly as they hoisted Anton back up the staircase.

As they made their way to Anton's room he distinctly heard Sirius mutter to Lupin

'I'll call for Healer Rowley.'

Anton was so weary he was unable even to groan audibly, succumbing to the tiredness he was asleep before he was even carried to the top of the stairs.

Anton fell immediately into a nightmare world, the darkness overwhelmed him almost instantly and he found himself back in the future. The sky was dark with not even one star to light the

permanent night sky, Anton stepped forward through a deserted and ravaged street. Bodies lined the road, some of them were suspended on poles making them sway in the wind. A breath caught in Anton's throat as a figure stepped into view at the end of the street. Her long blonde blue hair glowed out in the dimness and her pale features were visible from the distance that Anton stood at.

He took an involuntary step backwards as she moved further into the street, Anton reached to his back and drew the familiar hilt of his sword, the woman at the end of the street drew her own and raised the silver blade high into the air where it switched to blue. Anton echoed the movement the black of his blade converting to red. Lowering her blade she pointed the cerulean sword at Anton, summoning water she sent a powerful burst at Anton, he felt his eyes widen in shock and his breathing dramatically increased.

Just as the water was an inch from hitting him Anton tore himself out of the dream with a huge intake of oxygen. His eyes flashed open and he sat up straight in his bed with a small shout. At once the unwelcome face of Healer Rowley appeared in front of him waving her wand.

'He is exhausted,' she said ignoring the fact Anton was awake, and awake by less than pleasant means.

'How did that happen?' Sirius said concerned, he came to stand next to Healer Rowley.

'It can mean only that he has not been getting enough sleep,' she replied sharply 'and I did specify that he must get over fifteen hours a day!'

'He was supposed to be' Sirius said irritably 'we sent him to bed at eight last night'

'Well he obviously didn't sleep,' Rowley said 'and now he's paying the price.'

Anton felt a wave of sleep beginning to wash over him once more and he flopped back onto the pillows.

'He was definitely asleep,' Mrs Weasley said entering the room 'I checked on him at eight and he was fast asleep, and then I checked again at eight the next morning and he was still asleep, the sensors on his door indicated he had not gotten up all night.'

'You set a sensor on my door!' Anton said the shock causing him to sit back up.

'After the night you snuck back down we thought it would be for the best while you're still recovering,' Mrs Weasley said apologetically looking down at Anton.

'Gee thanks,' he muttered sarcastically.

'If that's the truth then maybe it we should re-admit him,' the Healer said uneasily.

'No thank you,' Anton said disgustedly 'the only reason I'm so tired is because when I fall asleep I manage to wake myself up again within about half an hour' he half lied.

'And why would that be?' the Healer asked unconvinced.

'When you see the people you love die, it tends to stay in your mind,' said Anton acerbically.

'There is no need to be like that,' Healer Rowley replied 'we have all lost people in this war.'

'I dream of them every night,' Anton said quietly 'when I close my eyes I see them all again, I see what happened to them.'

'Then there is only one thing I can prescribe,' she said less brusquely 'I think a dreamless sleep potion would be for the best.'

'On top of all the other rubbish you're making me drink,' Anton said despairingly as he watched Sirius, Mrs Weasley and Healer Rowley all give each other subtle looks.

‘So how much sleep extra is he going to need?’ Mrs Weasley asked anxiously.

‘Well if he drinks the potion now and if he wakes up in the night,’ she said pouring some liquid into a goblet and handing it to Anton ‘I would also insist that he drinks this potion every night while his body is recovering, maybe even for longer.’

‘Oh this is just fabulous,’ Anton said taking the goblet and regarding the contents pensively.

‘Drink it,’ ordered Rowley.

Anton took a quick swallow of the liquid and handing the goblet back, the sleep he had been suppressing enveloped him and slumping back he closed his eyes and for a rare event he fell into a dreamless sleep free from Voldemort and his servants.

As soon as Anton was dead to the world Sirius pulled the covers back over him and turned to the two women.

‘Should someone stay with him?’ he asked.

‘No that’s not necessary,’ she shook her head ‘though I will insist that he gets checked on every couple of hours.’

‘We’ll make sure of it,’ Mrs Weasley said waiting for the Healer to finish packing up her bag.

As they exited the room a few minutes later they never noticed the droplets of water that clung to the mirror.

Chapter Six

Anton dozed peacefully and when he awoke he found he had slept through the previous day, night and that it was half past five the next evening. For the first time he felt thoroughly rested, he next to jumped out of the bed, almost knocking the goblet of potion onto the floor in his haste. Anton pulled open his bedroom door and hurried into the bathroom as he crossed the hall laughter could be heard from down the stairs. Ignoring the noise he continued into the shower and switched the water on, taking the risk he stayed in for six minutes.

‘Anton! Are you awake?’ Sirius shouted up the stairs when the shower had finished.

‘Yeh I’m up!’ Anton called back as he pulled on a long sleeved t-shirt.

‘Well dinner’s on the table, and Molly said she’s setting you a plate’ he said back.

‘Coming I’ll be two minutes!’ Anton yelled down tying his hair back.

‘Right but there’s someone here you might like to meet,’ Sirius said loudly.

‘I’m coming!’ Anton replied hurrying down the stairs.

When he reached the bottom of the stairs he came face to face with Hermione, he halted immediately as he saw her face, he quickly disguised his shock as confusion as he looked from Hermione to Sirius who was standing next to her.

‘Hi,’ he said hesitantly not looking directly at the teenager.

‘Anton this is Hermione Granger,’ introduced Sirius with a flourish ‘and Hermione this is Anton Lukyen.’

‘It’s nice to meet you,’ Hermione said politely, she had a coat on and her trunk was on the floor next to her.

‘Nice to meet you to,’ Anton smiled at her.

'Hermione will be staying here for the rest of the school holidays,' Sirius informed Anton 'she's a good friend of the Weasley's.'

'Well it's good to have a new face around,' Anton said to her sincerely.

'Anton is that you?' Mrs Weasley's voice called from the kitchen.

'Yes Molly it's me,' Anton said making his way to the kitchen.

'Come and have some dinner then,' she said loudly 'you've been asleep for over thirty hours.'

'And it's been brilliant,' Anton laughed entering the room and sitting down next to Ron 'I can't remember the last time I slept like that.'

'In any case you're looking better,' she said heaping his plate with sausages

'Hello dear' she said turning to Hermione 'take of your coat I'll get you some food, you're going to be sharing a room with Ginny.'

'So what have I missed,' Anton asked tucking in, not failing to spot the sudden looks of interest from the teenagers.

'Not a lot,' Sirius said truthfully 'what we did a schedule for, went off without a hitch.'

Molly frowned despite the cryptic way Sirius was answering Anton's questions

'Sirius,' she said softly 'I'm sure you can tell Anton everything later, away from the children.'

'Of course he can,' Anton smiled at her 'that was me being stupid.'

'Don't be silly Anton, you're quite right to want to know what's been going on,' Mrs Weasley said quickly 'it's just some things the children are better off not hearing.'

'Mum!' protested Fred 'stop treating us like we are children.'

'Fred and I are both legal adults,' George added 'I think it's time we were let in on a few things.'

'Not a chance,' she replied curtly 'and when you're finished with our food you can get back to helping clean the house.'

Anton stuffed his last sausage into his mouth and looked apologetically at Molly Weasley.

'Sorry,' he muttered.

'Never mind that,' she said glaring at the twins 'I'll get you some more food.'

An owl flew to the kitchen window and began tapping furiously on the glass, Anton caught a glimpse of white feathers before Sirius pulled open the window and let the owl in. It took Anton less than a second to realise that the owl Hedwig, Sirius pulled a trio of letters from her beak and handed one each to Hermione and Ron and kept one for himself. They each ripped the letter's open and studied the writing intently.

Hermione was the first to throw hers down to the table closely followed by Sirius and a second later Ron.

'It's not fair that Dumbledore's made us limit what we say to him,' she seethed not protesting as Ginny grabbed her letter and scanned the contents.

Fred was reading Ron's letter with George looking over his shoulder 'are they all the same?' he said looking up.

'Stuff about it would be great if someone would tell him what was going on?' Sirius said looking depressed.

'That's it,' George answered.

Anton said nothing and just kept eating, he was well aware of what the contents of the letters were having written them himself eight years ago. Hedwig cocked her head curiously and studied Anton closely, she continued to stare at him until she was offered some food by Ron and then she turned away still keeping a wary eye on Anton.

'We should try and devise a way to get him messages without the risk of the letters being intercepted,' Hermione said thoughtfully.

'No,' Sirius said sharply 'I trust Dumbledore and he insisted that no potentially dangerous information is spoken or written outside the protection of secured locations, no matter who it's too.'

'What do you think Anton?' Hermione asked suddenly.

'I don't think I'm one of the best people to give advice,' Anton said carefully 'I agree with Dumbledore's opinion as if the wrong people get their hands on sensitive information it can prove costly...' Hermione made to open her mouth but Anton continued before she could say anything else.

'However being left in the dark is one of the most demoralising feeling's you can experience.'

'Speaking from experience?' Sirius asked quietly.

'It wasn't one of the best times of my life,' Anton replied honestly.

'They rarely are,' Sirius agreed.

Lupin came yawning through the fireplace at quarter to nine that night, Sirius poured him a firewhisky almost immediately and Lupin dropped onto a settee and closed his eyes tiredly.

'What a night!' he groaned swallowing the firewhisky in one gulp.

'That bad,' Sirius said smiling 'that should be good I'm up doing it tomorrow.'

'Is this the guarding of the Department of Mysteries?' Anton asked curiously knowing full well that all the teenagers were being safely occupied upstairs by Mrs Weasley.

'Yeh though nothing interesting has happened so far,' Sirius said drumming his fingers on the arm of the chair.

'That's good though,' Lupin said snapping his eyes open 'I'd rather guard an empty corridor than a corridor complete with an Evil wizard.'

'Wimp,' Sirius laughed flicking Lupin with a spark out of his newly returned wand.

'Well after you've stood your own guard you tell me what it's like,' Lupin answered 'I doubt someone with your patience would be able to stand eight hours in the dark and quiet.'

'Hey I'm an expert of surviving in dark places,' Sirius grinned 'though the silence aspect, more like an expert at being able to stand the screams of the poor Death Eaters.'

Lupin laughed and sitting up he poured himself another drink 'so Anton' he said 'it's good to see you up and looking a lot healthier than the last time I saw you.'

'I sort of just bombed,' Anton said eyeing the firewhisky 'though it was my own fault I was warned I had to get fifteen.'

'You've definitely had fifteen today,' Sirius said 'so I guess Molly will let you stay up till later.'

'It is the strangest thing,' Anton said looking at the two men 'to be completely self-reliant one day and then the next to have a whole contingent of people looking out for you.'

'I can relate to that entirely,' Sirius agreed 'one minute I was fleeing from everyone and then suddenly they're all congratulating me on proving my innocence.'

'I'm still waiting for that day,' Lupin joked 'werewolves still have an unfair disadvantage in society.'

Anton noticed both men watching him subtly to gauge his reaction, Anton smiled at Lupin unconcerned before pronouncing 'an old friend of mine found that it was easier to threaten to bite them if they weren't polite.'

Sirius roared with laughter at this statement and turning to Lupin he said 'somehow I can't imagine Moony saying that, he's much more likely perform a complex spell to throw them off-balance.'

'War changes people,' Anton replied knowing full well that if he failed that would be the exact person Lupin would change into.

'So what kind of education did you have?' Lupin asked Anton 'I was lucky enough to be able to teach at Hogwarts before I was forced to resign.'

'I went to a magical school until I was seventeen and then I was taught on the go' Anton said again twisting the truth.

'What were you taught in that you couldn't be taught at school?' Sirius said interested.

'My family found that the best defence is a good offence,' Anton said smiling faintly 'and the best way to fight dark wizards is to fight them at their own game.'

'Dark Arts?' Lupin said.

'One of,' Anton nodded 'Defence against, actual dark arts, that kind of thing, I'd already got a good grasp of other skills like transfiguration and Charms.'

'How about potions?' Sirius asked hopefully 'because it would kill Snape if someone else was as good as him.'

'I strongly doubt I'm as adept as a potions master,' Anton snorted 'I have a basic grasp but that remains the sum total.'

'Damn,' Sirius smirked 'and here was me hoping you'd knock Snivellus off his shining pedestal.'

'Satisfying but unlikely,' Anton said floating an empty glass across the room with his finger.

Sirius clicked his own fingers and the glass fell from the air to land on the thud on the new floor rug, Anton grinned and was about to return the move when Mrs Weasley hurried through the door.

'Quick!' she said flapping her arms at Sirius 'Dumbledore needs to speak with you and Remus right away.'

'Coming,' Lupin said tiredly pushing himself out of the chair with a hand from Sirius.

'Um, Molly,' Anton said 'where are the Death Eater files?'

'Over there by the fire Dear,' she said hurriedly.

'I can't see anything,' Anton said confused looking at the blank space by the fire.

'Oh sorry,' Mrs Weasley said waving her wand and revealing a stack of parchment 'we have to keep them concealed from the children.'

'Understandable,' Anton said as she rushed out of the room after the two marauders.

Anton picked a few of the folders up and began leafing through them, he opened the first folder and the name 'Bellatrix Lestrange' immediately had alarm bells ringing. Anton put her folder on the floor and over the top of it he wrote in flames 'Deadly'

The next folder belonged to a man named 'Herman Nell' Anton grimaced at the name and looked how long the sadist had been a Death Eater, the file read two months and it was blank at the point of 'number of recorded deaths'. Knowing exactly what the man was

going to be capable of Anton put his folder apart from Bella's and wrote over the top 'Potentially Dangerous and Deadly'.

By about an hour and half later Anton had gone through about fifty folders, most he was able to identify and categorise in a few minutes, a fraction proved to be more difficult with Anton unable to remember if they'd died before he became actively involved against them, or if there was another reason he couldn't recall them. There were about twelve groups each with their own flame title, the titles ranged from 'Deranged' to 'Innocuous'.

The door opened and Anton raised his hand to vanish the folders and names but at the last moment he realised it was Sirius coming in. The older man raised an eyebrow at the sight of Anton sitting cross legged on the floor surrounded by fire and files.

'Having fun?' he asked picking a folder from the stack labelled 'Annoying but Harmful'.

'Lucius Malfoy,' Sirius said disgusted reading the name 'he's definitely harmful to anyone who can't stand assholes.'

'What did Dumbledore want you for that was so urgent?' Anton asked curiously.

'Information on my darling cousin,' Sirius replied shaking his head 'and something about werewolves in Europe, but that was aimed at Moony.'

Anton nodded in understanding, it was certainly a strange feeling to have your questions answered when you enquired and not have to put up with the awkward answers.

'Are you on watch tonight?' Anton said opening another folder and seeing Pettigrew's face staring back.

'I start at midnight,' Sirius said watching as Anton dropped the folder onto 'Tragically Dead.'

'Good Luck,' Anton said seriously 'I really wish I could do something more useful than this.'

'Yeh but this work is valuable and less than a fortnight you can go on active missions,' Sirius said picking another folder up.

'I am counting the days,' Anton said turning back to the stack of files that had yet to be sorted.

'Are you going to be doing any more of those?' Sirius asked glancing at the clock 'it's nearly half ten.'

'Yeh but I only woke up five hours ago,' Anton said smirking 'I'm enjoying a late night.'

'Or at least until Molly tells you to go to bed,' Sirius taunted.

'At least I get to go to bed tonight,' Anton replied beginning to clear up some of the mess he was encircled with.

'I reckon there are quite a few people in this house that rely on potions for a goodnight's sleep.' Sirius said looking sad.

'Just a few?' Anton asked looking closely at the man he had grown to love when he had been younger, one of the people who he had regarded as a surrogate parent.

Sirius smiled slightly before helping Anton to clear up 'Molly's going to back soon and she's definitely going to start fussing you to get to bed.'

'I hate being fussed,' Anton said grumpily.

'Molly lives for it,' Sirius said smiling 'and cooking, she also lives for that.'

'I hope your not talking about me,' said a voice from the open door.

Both men turned to see the face of Mrs Weasley who was trying to look stern but a smile played at the corner of her mouth.

'But Molly you make the best conversation,' Sirius said standing up 'and without you we would have starved to death by now.'

'Well keep that in mind Sirius,' Molly said sternly 'otherwise you'll find yourself returning the state of food quality you had before we moved in.'

'Can't be worse than some of the stuff I had to eat on the move,' Anton said shuddering slightly 'have you ever tasted raw lizard? It's disgusting!'

'No I have to go with rats,' Sirius juddered 'they are foul.'

'Well as interesting as this conversation sounds can we talk about a different type of food,' Mrs Weasley said looking dubious 'maybe something that tastes nice.'

'Snake,' Anton said his eyes lighting up 'snake tastes nice.'

'I had some snake when I was on the run,' Sirius said nodding with a bemused expression 'it wasn't bad when it was cooked.'

'Enough!' she announced loudly 'let's change the topic completely, how about potions?'

'Potions,' Anton repeated looking queasy 'I'd rather go back to food.'

'Have you had any today?' Sirius asked studying Anton closely.

'I had some when I woke up,' Anton said defensively.

'That counts as this morning,' Sirius said loftily.

'I'll get you tonight's dose,' Mrs Weasley said exiting the room.

'That's not necessary as I had them this evening,' Anton protested 'that's counts as the night.'

'No that counts as when you woke up,' Sirius said as Mrs Weasley came back in with the box 'you need another set before you go to sleep.'

'Which is within the next half hour,' Mrs Weasley said firmly passing him a vial.

'I think I would both hate and love to be your child,' Anton said taking the vial with a scowl.

'I believe that that's the opinion her own children have,' Sirius said waiting for Anton to finish the potion.

Anton let out a small smile and then gagged at the taste of the concoction.

The next couple of days passed with similar happenings, Anton would spend most of the day sectioning files, the teenagers would spend the majority of the time cleaning and painting under the supervision of Mrs Weasley and Sirius and Lupin would get in late at night absolutely shattered. A full week after Anton had gotten out of hospital he found himself lying on his stomach on the living room floor at lunchtime playing chess with Ron, so far he was managing to keep up. The look of concentration on Ron's face was also making him smile.

'Pawn to E5,' Ron said eventually not taking his eyes from the board 'your good, who taught you?'

'Queen to E5,' Anton said 'I was taught by my brother and he was damn good.'

'I wish I could play him if he's better than you,' Ron said wistfully looking for another move after Anton had destroyed his pawn.

Anton grinned as he thought of Older Ron playing Younger Ron 'I don't think that's possible,' he said eventually.

‘Why not?’ Ron asked glancing up from the board.

‘A little curse called Avada Kedavra,’ Anton replied calmly ‘Knight to D3.’

Ron jerked his head up and his face went bright red ‘I’m sorry, I didn’t mean...’

‘Chill it Ron,’ Anton said smirking ‘he’d be laughing if he could see your face at the moment.’

‘Anton,’ said a voice ‘can I have a word?’

Anton rolled over and sat up to look at Dumbledore who was standing just inside the door.

‘Sure I’ll come right now,’ Anton said standing up ‘oh and Check Mate.’

‘What!’ Ron said scanning the board ‘how could you know I was going to pull that move?’

‘Magic,’ Anton said ‘spooky!’

When they had left the room Dumbledore headed to the room containing the black family tree, when Anton came through the door he shut and locked it quickly and turned to Anton.

‘I need you to do something,’ he said carefully ‘Molly will have my head for asking you to do this but I’m willing to take the risk if you are?’

‘What is it?’ Anton asked interested.

‘It’s nothing dangerous, well hopefully it’s not going to be’ Dumbledore said ‘it’s just we’ve run out of people and I need someone I can trust to watch Harry.’

‘Tonight?’ Anton said.

‘Yes but it’s only for about three hours until I can get Tonks to take over, though after next week you’ll be doing it for the full allocated time,’ Dumbledore answered ‘that’s not a problem is it?’

‘No,’ Anton said quickly ‘I’m fed up of being stuck in this house I’d appreciate the chance to get out.’

‘Excellent,’ beamed his former headmaster ‘you need to be ready in half an hour and dress in clothes you can fight in, not that I believe it will come to that.’

‘I’ll be ready,’ Anton said rejoicing the prospect of getting out ‘though I would like to ask where my sword is, I would want it back?’

‘I’m afraid it’s being held in the Ministry,’ Dumbledore replied ‘they said it was evidence, will that be a problem at the moment?’

‘No,’ Anton shook his head ‘I’ve always wanted to try a returning spell on a confiscated object.’

‘Good luck with that,’ Dumbledore said an amused expression on his face ‘you’ll be flooing to Privet Drive, and watching from Arabella Figg’s house.’

‘And if he walks off somewhere?’

‘You follow with uttermost discretion,’ Dumbledore said seriously ‘to keep Harry safe we must keep our own presence a secret.’

Twenty minutes later Anton was climbing through the fire grate dressed in his recently purchased combat gear, he reached for handful of powder not paying any attention to the roaring flames he was standing waist deep in.

‘No. 2 Privet Drive,’ he said clearly as the flames turned a vivid green.

The bottom fell out of the world and he zoomed past grate after grate until he eventually found himself climbing out of Mrs Figg’s fireplace.

Looking out of the window he saw his younger self sitting miserably on the garden wall of the Dursley's house. Anton felt a sudden burst of adrenalin at the prospect of seeing himself through a different prospective.

'Criminal isn't it,' Mrs Figg said coming to stand next to him 'I try and invite him over but he's started to avoid me, and I don't blame him.'

'Our experiences help us to grow stronger,' Anton said quietly.

'That's what I hope for,' she said picking up a cat that intertwined her legs 'now would you like some cake?'

Chapter Seven

'No thank you,' he replied smiling at her 'there is something I wouldn't mind getting on with if you don't mind.'

'Of course not,' she said returning the smile 'I had hoped to go and do some shopping, so if you're ok here I'll get on with it.'

'I'll be fine,' Anton said sitting down cross legged on the floor making sure he could still see Harry from where he was positioned.

'Wonderful,' Mrs Figg said picking her coat up 'if there's a problem just floo Dumbledore's office.'

'I'll make sure I do,' Anton nodded 'but before you go have you got an old piece of metal cutlery I can use that you don't mind losing?'

'Of course I'll get you a piece,' she said 'though what you want it for I can't imagine.'

'Thanks that'll be great,' Anton smiled again.

She gave Anton an old knife and left the house with an old bag clutched in her hand, Anton set the knife on the carpet next to him and looked out of the window to make sure Harry hadn't moved- he had chosen to think of his younger self as an entirely different person due to the peculiarity he felt addressing his younger self as himself now.

After ascertaining Harry wasn't going anywhere at the moment he got on with what he was doing. He picked up the knife and made a shallow cut in his middle finger spilling a couple drops of blood, next he conjured a ball of fire in one hand and held the bloody knife in the other.

'I call to the Elements,' he said clearly 'as Fire I ask you to return what is mine.'

He paused before continuing 'with my blood and through this metal I prove my stake in the Fire element and what rightly belongs to Fire.'

Anton thrust the blade into the fire, the fire changed to a bright blue and crackled menacingly, heat grew out of the combined items and it burned hotly. Anton held them together through strength and shear effort until eventually the fire began to grow, he held it aloft in his hands and waited as the inferno grew. When it was about a metre across it suddenly extinguished with a snap, and Anton found himself holding his sword, the blood and knife were also gone and all that remained was Anton's shining black weapon.

Anton smiled in triumph and grasped the handle tightly familiarising himself with the comforting weight 'I did it,' he whispered slightly in awe.

Four and a half hours later he climbed back through the fireplace and returned to Sirius's house, Mrs Weasley was waiting for him not looking at all happy.

'Do I even have to begin?' she asked tapping her foot 'reckless yet again!'

'I sat on a settee for four hours watching cats play,' Anton said lightly 'not at all reckless.'

'That would be your opinion,' Mrs Weasley said throwing her hands in the air in despair.

Anton attempted to look downcast but he was still elated about getting his weapon back and the joy was visible on his face.

'Oh come on!' she said eventually 'a meeting's happening right as we speak.'

They entered the room and quickly took their seats, Snape was speaking and it wasn't for a couple of seconds that he realised what exactly Snape was saying.

'The Dark Lord has a new lieutenant,' he said loudly.

This incited worried mutterings among the group and Snape had to wait a few minutes for the sound to die down until he could continue.

'We're yet to be introduced to her but she is powerful and seems to have appeared out of the blue,' Snape said 'she's also rumoured to have powers that are quite rare, I saw her last night from a distance.'

'Have you any idea what kind?' Lupin asked.

'An affinity with water supposedly,' Snape replied sneering 'the Dark Lord was impressed.'

'Please tell me she hasn't got blonde and blue hair?' Anton asked urgently standing up feeling his stomach drop as far as humanly possible.

'Yes...how did you...?' Snape said surprised.

'I thought I was rid of her,' Anton said faintly rubbing his hands furiously through his hair and eliciting worried looks from the people watching him.

'Anton what's wrong?' Sirius asked standing up as well.

'She's an Elemental,' Anton answered 'Earth, Wind, Fire and Water.'

'And?' Mrs Weasley said looking concerned.

'Earth and Wind were killed,' Anton said panicking slightly 'Fire and Water survived.'

With that he lit a ball of flame 'she betrayed us, she sold us out to Dark Wizards to save her own skin.'

A few gasps followed this statement and Dumbledore spoke up 'Anton could you show us what she is capable of? If it's not too hard for you.'

Anton gave a curt nod and placed his wand against his temple drawing out a silvery beam 'I'll show you from the start of our time as Elementals.'

He threw the beam against a wall and the Order got ready to watch it, a lot of them feeling sickened already.

Memory

The four of them were sitting in a dimly lit room, Harry, Ron, Ginny and Hermione. Or as they had changed to

Harry- Anton

Ginny- Gia

Ron- Rhoan

Hermione- Ofelia

The rest of the Order watched the unfamiliar people, their faces had been changed and it was no longer possible for the Order to recognise even their own children. Sirius gazed at the screen trying to process the images he was seeing.

He recognised Anton immediately though his hair was short and he was at least three years younger than he was now, they sat in a circle on the floor their faces young and innocent. On Anton's right side there was the only other lad, and Sirius realised this must be his brother. The boy had silver hair and was jumping up and down with childish excitement making mini twisters twirl in the circle. The girl on Anton's left had long brown and green hair and a smile was stretched across her face as she grew a flower out the ground.

Opposite Anton sat the girl that was now the right hand of Voldemort, she had long velvety blonde hair tinged with streaks of blue, to the watching crowd she looked harmless and enthusiastic.

'We need to make a pact,' the green haired girl said suddenly 'after all we're the only ones that are left.'

Everyone else's faces hardened at this pronouncement and eyes clouded over in grief

'You're right,' Anton agreed 'we should promise to tell each other the truth no matter what the cost.'

'Why?' the blonde haired girl asked innocuously 'we already know we can trust each other, I've known all of you for years, we practically grew up together.'

'We need to make a pact so we'll stand against Voldemort' Rhoan insisted 'to make sure our family and friends didn't die in vain!'

'We are the only ones left' Anton said quietly 'if we don't trust each other then who can we trust?'

'You're right,' the blonde girl agreed 'we'll do it tonight, a pact that we'll stand together and fight no matter what the cost.'

'No matter what,' the green hair girl repeated growing vines in the centre to entwine Rhoan's twisters.

'No matter what' Anton said adding fire to the mix in the centre.

'No matter what' the traitor nodded creating spurts of water.

The Elements combine to create a solid block of white light, the colour of power and purity.

Anton pulled the memory of the wall and putting his wand to his head he barely paused before drawing another two beams of light.

Memory

A cage hung from the air, it wasn't possible to see what was in the cage from Anton's memory but a limp bloody hand hung out from the side and a lock of green and brown hair left no on in doubt of who exactly it was.

Anton and Rhoan stood beneath both shaking in shock as if unable to believe what they were seeing the grief was evident in their faces, their clothes were grubby and their hair was longer and knotted.

Rhoan gave in first, he collapsed with racked sobs against Anton pulling him to the ground as he fell. Anton clung to his brother silent tears running down his face as he clutched the sobbing teenager.

'I promised' sobbed Rhoan 'I promised to keep her safe and I failed, I failed Mum and Dad.'

'We failed' Anton said trying to draw himself together for the sake of his friend 'but we are not to blame this is her fault, she betrayed us.'

'She wouldn't!' Rhoan screamed drawing back 'She would never have killed her, she loved her, she was her best friend,'

'Then who else was it?' Anton said angrily rubbing his streaming eyes 'how do you explain this?'

'I don't know?' Rhoan wailed a fresh wave of sobs encompassing him 'I just want her back!'

'I know,' Anton said hugging his adoptive brother 'I know exactly how you feel.'

The memory ended as harshly as it had begun, Anton's face was stoic and cold as he waited for the next memory to take place, he was trying not to look at the Weasley's, they didn't know it but they were watching their own son break down and that fact was breaking Anton.

Memory

They watched as the teenagers sat miserably in the cold at least two years had passed by and both lads looked grubby and tired.

'I'm going to get some wood' Ron/ Rhoan said quietly walking to the door of the old shack he and Anton were sharing, there was no furniture and the only clothes they had to protect themselves was the ones they were wearing.

'What, now?' Anton asked studying his best friend closely taking in the dark tired bags and pale face.

'I need a walk' Rhoan growled taking a swig on some old bottle, he looked out at the dark windy night 'I'm Wind what's this little bit of breeze going to do to me?'

'Let me come with you!' Anton said slightly desperately as he looked at the state of his friend.

'NO!' Rhoan half yelled 'I need some time to myself' he paused to compose himself 'I didn't mean...I just need some time, please Anton just let me be.'

Anton nodded unhappily 'just be careful we don't know who's out there.'

'If that bitch is here I'll kill her' Rhoan said his voice slightly slurred by alcohol 'but right now I just need some time.'

'Ten minutes and then I'm coming to look for you' Anton said sternly.

'You're not my Dad' Rhoan said stumbling over his words 'remember he's Dead!'

'I was there as well,' Anton muttered turning away from the former red-head.

'Everyone was there' Rhoan grumbled yanking the door open and stepping out into the roaring wind 'even Mum was there.'

When he had gone Anton buried his head in his hands and rubbed his eyes hard as if trying to dispel a nightmare. Thirty seconds had barely passed when a yell could be heard clearly in the hut, the door was burst open by a strong gust and it howled

'Anton!'

Anton didn't pause he grabbed his sword and ran from the shack, he ran through the pitch black forest night not stopping until he heard a shout of

'Avada Kedavra!'

Anton stumbled and fell to his knees in despair, pushing himself back up he started running again. He burst through into a clearing and halted as he saw Rhoan's prone body on the ground.

'No' he whispered.

'Looks like he's dead' a voice said.

Anton and the Order all watched as the blonde girl stepped into frame she was dressed in a silver robe and as Anton stared at her she twirled on the spot

'Appropriate?' she asked innocently 'I had it made especially to kill Rhoan, after all it was his colour.'

Anton snarled and raised his blade 'why did you do it?' he said bitterly.

'Power' she smiled 'I did it for power, goodbye old friend.'

Anton hurled a rocket of flame at the empty spot she had just been standing in and screamed 'Bitch!'

His anger left him and he turned round to look at the dead body of Rhoan and a sob burst from his mouth.

Anton clicked his fingers and the memory vanished, he regarded the stunned Order with a look of defiance on his face.

'When I get the chance I will kill her' he whispered before fleeing the room.

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The room exploded in noise as people began speaking of the power and nerve their new enemy possessed, Sirius ignored it and after urging a look from Mrs Weasley he hurried after Anton.

He found the boy sitting on the stairwell staring at nothing, Sirius sat down tentatively next to him and put a comforting hand on his shoulder, Anton continued to stare into space his face grief stricken.

‘Anton,’ Sirius said softly ‘I’m so sorry you had to go through all of that again.’

Anton turned his head slowly and gazed at his unknowing Godfather ‘they’re dead,’ he said miserably ‘I never saved them and I didn’t even realise my own best friend was a murderer.’

‘The people we trust the most are often those who cut us the deepest,’ Sirius said sadly.

‘I failed them,’ Anton said a lone tear trickled down his face ‘I was alone for so long without them.’

‘Trust me when I say I know how that feels,’ Sirius said thinking of Pettigrew ‘but the pain does get easier.’

‘I had to bury him on my own,’ Anton whispered ‘there was always someone to do it with before, but when he died...’

‘He’d be proud of you if he could see you now,’ Sirius said firmly ‘you have nothing to be sorry for.’

‘I just want them all back,’ Anton said real tears beginning to spill down his face ‘I want my parents back, I want my friends and family back, and I want my Godfather back.’

He seemed to deflate in energy and he let hot angry sobs peel from his body ‘I want them back!’

‘I know,’ Sirius said his own tears visible on his face, he pulled the young man who was barely older than a teenager closer to him.

Anton put his head against Sirius's shoulder and let all of the pain he had been keeping inside him spill out, Sirius clutched him around his shoulder, just like he had held Ron when Earth had died. Anton savoured the first real contact he was having with his Godfather, what he had wanted ever since he had been a child.

They sat there for a long time with Anton crying like the child he had never had the chance to be, for Sirius it had brought back his own similar feelings of pain, loss, betrayal and loneliness.

That night a knock came at Sirius's door.

'Come in,' Sirius called looking up from the photo album he was going over.

Lupin pushed the door open and walked in, Sirius's old Gryffindor room was gone and was instead taken up by a more adult blue and silver, grey colour scheme, Sirius himself was sitting at his desk with his feet propped up on the antique bureau.

'I'm sorry I missed it tonight,' Lupin said apologetically 'I heard the meeting was eventful.'

'Did Molly tell you?' Sirius asked looking at his friend.

'No Kingsley did when we swapped' Lupin replied 'was it as bad as he made it sound?'

'Worse,' Sirius said groaning 'it was awful Anton had to match the memories all over again and it brought back...you know.'

'Peter's betrayal,' Lupin said quietly 'is that why you've got the old photos out?'

Sirius looked down at a picture of himself, Lupin, James and Peter 'memories' he muttered 'sometimes they're good sometimes...'

'How was Anton?' Lupin asked concerned.

'A wreck,' Sirius said honestly 'he was completely lost, we got him to go to bed eventually, after he'd spent so long bottling it all up it was like it opened the floodgates.'

'How did everyone else take it?' Lupin said.

'Pretty understanding, most have lost people themselves,' Sirius said 'we all have the memories, we just saw Anton's in a bleaker light.'

'Do you think he'll be ok?'

'I think so,' Sirius said tentatively 'but Goddamn it he's only twenty one, we were still pulling pranks at that age!'

'And look where that got us,' reminded Lupin 'maybe it's better to be prepared.'

'You and I both know that's not true,' Sirius retorted 'you shouldn't have to give up your childhood to fight off bastards. Looking at Anton makes me worry if that's what Harry's going to have to face.'

Anton sat in his bed with the bedclothes wrapped round his feet, his mind was still in the future and the deaths to come. His door opened and Sirius stuck his head round taking in Anton's depressed state.

'Can I come in?' he asked gently.

Anton nodded and Sirius pushed the door open, he was carrying two mugs and he was balancing them to make sure he didn't spill any of the liquid.

'Coffee?' he said shaking one of the cups.

Anton held out a hand and took the silently, Sirius sat on the end of the bed and took a sip of his own drink watching Anton closely.

'How are you?' he asked.

'Fine,' Anton muttered looking up 'thanks for...' he trailed off after giving Sirius a meaningful look.

Sirius smiled in understanding 'I'm just glad I could have been there,' he said truthfully 'though you should get some sleep you look beat.'

'Can't,' Anton said staring at the light brown liquid.

'Well at least have something to drink,' Sirius said gesturing to the cup.

Anton quirked his lips slightly and took a big gulp just to satisfy the man, as soon as he had swallowed it he felt drowsy his eyelids began to droop and he tried to blink to clear the fatigue. The mug was plucked out of his hand and Anton looked at Sirius's apologetic face trying to process what it meant.

'You drugged me,' he said his voice slurring.

'Desperate times call for desperate measures,' Sirius said shrugging 'and you look shattered.'

Anton flopped back into his bed yawning.

'It's fast acting,' Sirius said looking guilty.

'No shit,' Anton said succumbing to sleep.

Sirius placed both cups of coffee on the bedside table and stood up, turning to Anton he pulled the covers him and turning off the light he picked the cups up and left the room.

Chapter Eight

Anton woke feeling better than he had, the memories of death and loss had been forced back into the depths of his mind and he felt grateful that Sirius had gone to the measures that he had. Cooking smells had wafted into Anton's room and hunger became the most pressing concern, he got out of bed and finding himself still in the clothes he had worn the day before he decided it would better to wash first.

He found the bathroom empty so he locked the door and pulled off his sweaty clothes, the wound on his side was almost completely healed, it was fully pink now, all of the purple infection had gone. However it still looked like a formidable gash, Anton stepped into the shower and washed quickly timing himself to make he didn't remain in the shower any longer than was healthy. Dressed once again in jeans and a t-shirt he left his room.

When he got downstairs the smell was coming from the kitchen, he opened the door and entered it to find only Sirius and Lupin at table with the remnants of breakfast scattered around them. They both looked up as if regarding a primed bomb, Sirius looked contrite as Anton's eyes settled on him.

'I suppose I owe you an apology, he said pulling a face.

Anton regarded him critically for a few moments before smiling 'I should thank you really, he said 'I wasn't about to sleep and you drugging me certainly fixed that.

'Molly's kept you some breakfast,' Lupin said jumping in 'she said it only needs warming.

'Where is everyone?' Anton asked grabbing the plate Lupin had indicated.

'Molly and Arthur went to Diagon Alley with the kids,' Sirius replied 'I think Tonks might have gone as well.

Anton heated the plate with a flame in his hand, setting it on the table he was just about to start eating when a house-elf popped into the room. It was definitely not Kreacher but a younger elf entirely, she was younger and was wearing the relics of a curtain.

‘Danky is bringing a message,’ she said ‘Danky is telling Mr Anton that Mr Dumbledore is wanting a word.’

‘Thank you Danky,’ Anton replied putting his fork back down ‘where is this word going to take place?’

‘Mr Dumbledore is hoping you will travel through the flames to visit him,’ the house-elf said ‘sooner rather than later.’

‘I’ll go now.’ Anton said standing back up ‘will he be in his office?’

‘Yes, he is telling Danky that is where he is.’

Anton went over to the kitchen’s fireplace and taking some floo powder he dropped it into the flames.

‘See you later then,’ he called to the two men.

Heading into the fire he called the address and vanished in the green flames, he stepped out into the old comfort of Dumbledore's office. The headmaster was sitting behind his desk his white beard gleaming from the light filtering through the windows.

‘Anton,’ he beamed ‘please come and have a seat.’

Anton walked out of the fire and went over to the chair in front of the desk, he sat down hesitantly unsure of what to expect.

‘Relax,’ twinkled Dumbledore ‘nothing bad is about to happen I assure you.’

‘Why did you want to speak to me?’ he asked.

‘I was wondering Anton what you could tell me about yourself, Sirius has already been kind enough to tell me you are trained in fighting

against the Dark Arts as well as having a fair knowledge on them yourself.'

Anton shrugged as he thought. What exactly could he say certainly not the whole truth in any case 'Sirius is right I do have a good understanding of the Dark Arts,' Anton admitted 'I have also been taught to be a adequate Occulmens, though Legulimacy was something I never got the hang of.'

'Not everyone can,' Dumbledore agreed 'though it is hard enough to learn Occulmancy, what about sport?'

'I played seeker at school,' Harry smiled at the memory 'I was pretty good, and when I'm not infected with poison I usually run and I'm a black belt in both Karate and Judo.'

'So you can hold your own in fights then?'

'I have done and probably will do again,' Anton said confused 'but what exactly is this for?'

'All will be revealed Anton,' Dumbledore said not giving anything away 'I did notice you playing chess with Ron Weasley, so I'm assuming you don't mind teenagers?'

'No,' Anton said growing ever more perplexed 'Professor?'

'I have a proposition for you,' Dumbledore said seriously 'would you consider taking the job of Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher?'

'You want me to be your new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher' Anton said in disbelief 'are you serious?'

'Definitely,' Dumbledore said 'I need a teacher for at least a year and you are obviously capable for the job.'

'But I'm only twenty one,' Anton said 'I'd be a rubbish teacher.'

'I strongly doubt you'd be rubbish and you'd be twenty two by September,' Dumbledore said twinkling faintly 'but I need a teacher and if I don't get one, I can trust then the Ministry will see fit to place their own teacher in Hogwarts.'

'A spy,' Anton said rubbing his head.

'A spy,' agreed Dumbledore 'everyone else who I have approached has been too scared to take up the position, the job hasn't exactly had the greatest survival record.'

'And if I take the job?' Anton asked curiously.

Dumbledore smiled as he realised Anton was beginning to consider the offer 'if you take the job, you will teach all years from first to seventh and you get weekends off.'

'I can still take part in active missions?' Anton said expectantly 'being a teacher won't impair me from stopping Voldemort's new Lieutenant?'

'No it won't,' Dumbledore replied 'I have a couple of teachers who actively work for the Order during term time.'

'I'd like that,' Anton said 'so what's the pay like?'

'For the position you'll be taking its 30,000 galleons per year, 25,000 after tax.'

'What are my sleeping arrangements going to be like? Because I'm not actually that keen on sharing.'

'You get your own quarters, which include a bedroom, living space and bathroom. Your office will be attached to your classroom' Dumbledore informed him carefully 'you have to set homework at least once a week and mix theory lessons with practical.'

'And you're seriously offering me this job?' Anton asked still mystified as to why Dumbledore would give him a job.

'We need people who will help train the children to defend themselves against the coming battle,' Dumbledore replied 'and with your experience you can help with that, after all it's our duty to make sure they're prepared.'

'And I can choose what I teach?' Anton asked his mind whirring of all the possibilities he could instruct on.

'Roughly,' Dumbledore replied 'you would have to make sure that the students learnt all the things on the syllabus but you would be able to teach it how you like.'

'Professor Anton Lukyen,' Anton said with a laugh 'that sounds strange.'

'So you're considering the position?' Dumbledore said watching Anton closely.

Anton thought of his own fifth year and the delightful reign of Dolores Umbridge, was that really what he wanted to inflict on Hogwarts.

'When do is start?'

Dumbledore smiled his eyes beaming 'September 1st, though you may like to arrive earlier to settle in.'

'September 1st' Anton said standing up 'I'll be there.'

'And Anton, congratulations on retrieving your sword, the Minister was incredibly put out when he discovered it missing.'

When Anton got back to the house breakfast had long since passed and Mrs Weasley was back and manning the stove once more.

'Was Diagon Alley very busy?' he asked her as he tucked ravenously into a plate of her food.

'Not really dear,' she said 'why are you thinking of going there?'

'I need some supplies,' Anton replied as the five teenagers came looking for food all looking incredibly dusty 'and I want to get out for a while.'

'You're better going early then,' she instructed 'it'll get busier as it gets later.'

'Mum do we have to keep cleaning?' Ron groaned 'There must be a hundred rooms to this place!'

'It's keeping you out of trouble,' Mrs Weasley replied setting down plates 'you should thank me for giving you something to do.'

'Yes Mum,' Fred said 'Thank you very much.'

'Wouldn't know what we would have done if you hadn't given us such a fun job,' George finished.

Anton wolfed down the last of his food before Ginny and Hermione had even begun to start eating.

'I'm going then,' he said 'see you later.'

'Make sure you're back by the meeting,' warned Molly 'it's at eight.'

Anton went to Flourish and Blotts as his first port of call, when he entered the shop he noticed a few familiar faces in amongst the witches and wizards shopping there. Neville was being berated by his formidable grandmother about something, it took everything within Anton not to go over to her and tell her just how amazing a wizard Neville was going to be.

Turning to the manager that had appeared by his side he asked

'Have you got any suitable texts on Defence Against the Dark Arts?'

'We have just had a new stock delivered' he replied leading Anton over to a section of the shop he had never bothered with before 'it's becoming a very popular choice of reading, is there any style you wanted in particular?'

'I was hoping I could get a few on different learning levels,' Anton said already thinking of lessons 'I'm personally quite good in Defence, I was just trying to familiarise myself with what younger underage wizards might need to learn.'

'Right then how many would you be interested in buying?'

'About ten, maybe more but I definitely need at least one that would suit each school year group.' Anton answered peering at some of the shelves.

'Teacher then?' the manager asked interested.

'Brand new this year at Hogwarts,' Anton said with a small smile 'not sure exactly what to expect.'

'Well if you're the teacher you might want to let us know your finalised book list,' the manager said thoughtfully 'so we can stock up.'

'When would you need it by?' Anton said picking up a book entitled 'When Defence is the Only Option.'

'Next ten days realistically,' the manager said 'letters are usually sent out on the August 1st and as it's already July 15th.'

'Ten days,' Anton nodded 'now about these books?'

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He exited half an hour later with ten different books to choose from for teaching and five volumes for himself. The next place he needed to go was Madam Malkins, he had to get robes that were suitable to teach in. Anton was thinking hard as he headed there, he was holding his shrunken books in a bag.

He needed a style, it had to be practical and teacherish, jeans were out of the question. He pushed the door opened and greeted the seamstress.

'I was wondering if I could have some new robes, closed and open.'

'Of course' she replied gesturing 'step on up.'

Anton stood on the stool and she began measuring him,

'How many were you hoping for?' she asked.

'Twenty,' Anton said thinking about the two he already had 'twenty at least, they've got to last me all year.'

'Any colours?'

'Black with red,' he replied 'but appropriate for a school environment.'

'If that is what you want,' she said nodding 'do you want to choose them all individually or do you trust my judgement.'

'I trust your judgement not mine,' Anton admitted 'when will they be ready?'

'Give it a couple of days,' Madam Malkin replied 'it's a big order.'

'Can I add to it and ask that they're all fire proof?'

'It will cost you more,' she answered.

'Not an issue,' Anton smiled.

Anton walked along the warm street, his feet drew to a stop outside of Ollivander's wand shop. Anton pulled his black wand out of his pocket and looked at it, it wasn't his original wand and he felt no connection with it, it wasn't his. The only option was to get another one, Anton

felt a slight thrill of excitement so he went into the shop and his eyes fell on Mr Ollivander.

'Excuse me,' he said politely 'I was wondering if you could supply me with a wand.'

'What is wrong with your own wand?' Ollivander asked pointing to the black wand Anton was holding.

'This wand didn't choose me,' Anton said wryly 'and my original wand was destroyed by another party.'

'It's a terrible sin to destroy a wand,' Ollivander said taking the wand and inspecting it 'Thirteen inches, black wood containing one harpy hair and one giant fingernail.'

'That's...interesting,' Anton said unsure of what to say the pronouncement of the contents.

'No it's foolish,' Ollivander said irritably 'that combination would lead a powerful but extremely volatile wand. The results of which could mean the wand would let you down at a crucial moment, maybe refuse to work or even stop working permanently. No good wandmaker would have made this wand unless they hoped it would fail the owner.'

Anton thought of all the points the wand could have failed him and grimaced at the thought, its only redeeming feature was the fact it had been the brother to Wormtail's wand.

'So I would be better getting a new one then?'

'Almost certainly,' Ollivander said fixing Anton with a piercing look 'and disposing of this wand would be best. What's your name?'

'Anton Lukyen' he said.

'I don't remember you,' Ollivander said surveying Anton closely 'and I remember everyone, so this would mean you didn't get your original wand from me.'

Anton shook his head.

‘Though the name Lukyen, I do remember that family living in Russia about a hundred years ago.’

‘I’m a distant relative,’ Anton lied again as Ollivander pulled out a long tape measure with silver markings on it out of his pocket.

‘Hold out your wand arm,’ he measured Anton from shoulder to finger, then wrist to elbow, shoulder to floor, knee to armpit and around his hand.

He went over to his shelves and started to pull wands out.

‘Birch wood, fourteen inches containing one unicorn hair,’

Anton flicked the wand and a glass pane shattered, Mr Ollivander snatched the wand off him and handed him another.

‘Twelve inches, willow containing dragon heartstring.’

This time Anton blew a stack of papers off a chair.

‘Nearly’ the wandmaker muttered.

‘I wonder...try this, thirteen inches, mahogany containing phoenix feather and a new idea of mine is the addition of one salamander scale.’

Anton took the dark brown wand and immediately felt the warmth spreading up his arm a streaming burst of red and gold sparks shot out.

‘Excellent,’ Ollivander said ‘that was my newest wand, eight galleons if you wouldn’t mind.’

Anton left the shop with his new wand feeling a lot more comfortable, still with a lot more shopping to do. The display in Quality Quidditch Supplies had him pausing, the Firebolt. He didn’t have a broom and

he couldn't imagine having anything below the standard he could freely afford.

Ten minutes later he walked out with a Firebolt on order, it had cost him three hundred galleons and he was under the opinion it had been worth every knut.

An hour and half later he had bought a trunk, general supplies and narrowly avoided running into the Malfoy's who were coming out of Knockturn Alley with Lucius looking particularly murderous.

It took until the next day when Anton got round to looking at the books, the meeting the previous night had been fairly uneventful except for the fact Anton was now allowed to go out on active missions.

So far he'd chosen:

First Years- The Dark Forces: A guide to Self-Protection by Quentin Trimble

Second Years- Dark Arts: How to combat them by Asher Kabinnsky

Third Years- Practical Defence and Theory by Maggie Arcane

Fourth Years- The Dark Forces: A Further guide to Self-Protection by Quentin Trimble

Fifth Years- Advanced Defence and Magical Combat by Barb Kenmare

Sixth Years- Defence: The Dark Arts, the Spells and Curses by Billius Blake

Seventh Years- Extreme Defence Against Dark Arts by Kilvern Maytere

A book Anton particularly liked was 'Ancient Curses and Combat: the Methods and Effects' while it showed how to do complex spells that were useful in Defence it also displayed the effects of the curses.

After sending the list to both Dumbledore and the Manager of Flourish and Blotts he wandered into the kitchen to get something to eat, there was no one around so he was free to get whatever he wanted. Searching through the fridge he eventually picked a plate of leftover casserole, heating in his usual way he tucked into it with a fork while still reading the book. Halfway through an exceptionally gruesome section Hermione and Ron came wondering into the room.

'What you looking at?' Ron asked curiously leaning over the book, he took on look at the diagram and quickly backed away 'that is gross!'

'The Eucalants Curse,' Hermione read 'turns the victim...inside out.'

'Did you see the picture?' Ron said looking sick 'it was still moving!'

'It is an excessive curse,' Anton agreed 'but don't worry Ron you need both the knowledge and a certain potion and incantation to make it work, it's long been abandoned due to the amount of effort it needs. Only sadistic torturers would even dream of using it.'

'Can you stop it?' Hermione asked keenly.

'With a certain spell,' Anton nodded 'if you remember only Avada Kedavra is unblockable.'

'Then why are you looking at it?' Ron said confused 'if people don't bother using it?'

'That is the assumption you can never take,' Anton said seriously 'better wizards have died because they disregarded curse they thought was out dated.'

His broom arrived two days later by a contingent of three owls that flew in during breakfast. Anton had only got back from watching Harry

ten minutes earlier and was absolutely delighted at the delivery, the note with it read.

The Firebolt

Delivery Date: 30th June

Delivery Time: 8:00 am

Delivery to: Anton Lukyen

Cost Paid: On Order

We wish you all the satisfaction this product can provide

Quality Quidditch Supplies

‘Well if I had known you were loaded I would have asked for rent,’ Sirius laughed inspecting the broom closely.

Anton felt slightly embarrassed but he was nevertheless grateful that he had bought the broom ‘my parents’ he said putting the note down ‘were nice enough to leave me quite a comfortable inheritance when they died, I think my dad would be happy I spent it on the broomstick.’

‘Now that’s the kind of man I can understand,’ Sirius smiled ‘why have it collecting dust in a bank when you could buy a Firebolt instead, I think I would have liked your dad.’

‘I think he would have liked you as well,’ Anton said seriously, his Godfather didn’t know how close to the truth he actually was.

They were interrupted by Ron and Hermione thumping angrily in.

‘Problem?’ Sirius asked amused.

‘Birthday cards,’ Ron said annoyed ‘what kind of friend do I come across as when I write something as vague as hope you’re enjoying your Birthday we’ll all be thinking of you!’

'You should read mine' Hermione returned equally furious 'I expect we'll be seeing you soon, Harry'll be feeling so out of it and we can't say anything about anything interesting!'

'I'm having the same problem,' Sirius agreed his good mood rapidly vanishing but it'll be worth it if our mail gets intercepted and all they find out is he's getting some chocolate for his birthday.'

'It's tomorrow then?' Anton asked though he knew the answer.

'Yes the 31st July,' Sirius said glumly, and then as if he had suddenly realised something 'wasn't your birthday this month?'

'Urm it was,' Anton cast around for a date, having the same birthday as his past self wasn't clever, so he had quite a few dates to choose from 'it was the twenty...fifth.'

'But that was days ago!' Mrs Weasley said turning to face him 'why didn't you say anything?'

'It was only my birthday,' Anton shrugged 'nothing special.'

'Nothing special!' this time Sirius joined in 'does that mean you spent the whole of your birthday standing in...complete boredom?' Sirius said catching himself just in time.

Lupin frowned at Sirius as he realised he'd been about to say the corridor outside the Department of Mysteries.

'It wasn't that bad,' Anton shrugged 'better than some years.'

Before anyone could protest any further another owl came soaring through the window, it dropped a stiff letter in front of Anton with a certain pride before flying back out.

Anton picked the letter up, the wax seal was marked with the Ministry of Magic emblem. He opened it cautiously and read the following.

Dear Mr Lukyen,

You are summoned to attend a meeting with the Minister of Magic Cornelius Fudge. You are required today at three O Clock to discuss the events, and events leading up to June 10th and the subsequent death of Peter Pettigrew, former Death Eater.

If you fail to appear you will be escorted by Ministry Officials to supply your account of what happened.

If you arrive in the atrium at quarter to three there will be someone to meet you

With Best Wishes

Yours Sincerely

Percy Weasley

The Ministers Private Office

Ministry of Magic

Anton flicked his eyes over the letter once more before passing it to Sirius

'I suppose I should have expected that' he said thinking of how he was going to answer the questions without revealing he was lying.

'I suppose,' agreed Sirius.

Another owl flew in and deposited a letter, Anton pulled it open and read.

Anton,

It would be best for the time being if our arrangement was not discussed with the Minister- that being if he actually knows anything of it

Yours Sincerely

Albus Dumbledore

'Brilliant,' Anton thought to himself 'just brilliant.'

Chapter Nine

Anton dressed in the set of plain black robes that Sirius and Lupin had acquired for him and tied his hair back, he also left off his sword and took only his wand. There was no need to worsen matters by looking threatening and giving the Ministry the chance to make assumptions about him.

He was just about to leave the house when Mrs Weasley grabbed his arm

‘One moment,’ she said pulling him into the kitchen ‘you need a haircut to make yourself more respectable.’

‘What's wrong with my hair?’ Anton said indignantly.

‘The Minister,’ Mrs Weasley said sternly ‘will take one look at this mess and peg you for a murderer immediately.’

She pushed Anton into a chair and pulled a silver pair of scissors out of her pocket. When Anton’s hair was free of its band she brushed it out and began snipping. In the years that Anton had let his hair go wild it had reached nearly a foot down his back.

‘I suppose you want to keep it longer?’ Mrs Weasley said disapprovingly.

‘Yes,’ Anton said as he watched in horror as a long strip of hair fell to the floor.

‘Right keep still then,’ she instructed.

When she had eventually finished she summoned a mirror and passed it to Anton, he looked into it nervously and was actually quite pleased with how it had turned out. She had cut his hair so it fell just millimetres below his shoulders, she had cut the sides shorter so he could sweep them out of his face and added a few layers.

‘Wow’ he said the effect made him look more responsible, he still had the aura of danger to him but now it looked like he knew when and when not to lose his temper ‘thanks Molly.’

She beamed happily and gestured him up from the chair ‘I’m glad you like it dear, I just wish Bill would let me do his. Now go or you’ll be late!’

After Mr Weasley had given him the number of the Ministry’s entrance point he opened the front door and stepped out on to the top step, pausing he surveyed the street before disappearing with a crack.

He arrived next to a red telephone Anton quickly opened the door and stepped inside, picking up the telephone receiver he looked at the dial and began turning it

‘Six...two...four...four...two’ Anton muttered under his breath.

The dial whirred smoothly back into place and the voice of a cool female filled the box.

‘Welcome to the Ministry of Magic. Please state your name and business.’

‘Anton Lukyen,’ he spoke into the mouth piece ‘meeting with the Minister at three.’

‘Thank you,’ said the cool female voice ‘Please take the badge and attach it to the front of your robes.’

Anton picked the silver badge up from the metal shoot and read Anton Lukyen, Meeting with the Minister. He pinned it to the front of his robes and the female voice spoke again.

‘Visitor to the Ministry, you are required to submit to a search and present your wand for registration at the security desk, which is located at the far end of the Atrium.’

Anton waited for the floor of the box to start to swallow him. When it eventually did he waited a minute in the darkness until the light appeared by his feet, it grew until the light filled the whole box, the door sprang open and the woman's voice came again saying.

'The Ministry of Magic wishes you a pleasant day.'

Anton stepped out and came face to face with Percy Weasley who was looking pompous and important.

'Welcome to the Ministry' he said surveying Anton through his horn rimmed spectacles 'if you would follow me please.'

Percy walked down the hall and past the fountain with Anton following at a slight distance as the Weasley headed to the Golden gates. He stopped by the security desk and the badly shaven wizard passed a golden rod up and down his back. When he had finished Anton knowing the drill handed his wand over to the security wizard, the wizard dropped it onto the strange brass instrument. The instrument vibrated for a few seconds before dispelling a narrow strip of parchment.

'Thirteen inches, mahogany containing phoenix feather and one salamander scale, been using it for three days is that correct?'

'Yes,' Anton acknowledged.

He impaled the parchment with a brass spike and handed the wand back to Anton

'Wait a minute?' he said noticing Anton's badge 'aren't you that guy?'

'Thank you Eric,' Percy Weasley said motioning Anton to follow him into the stream of witches and wizards heading through the gates.

They branched off into the corridor of elevators and Percy stepped into an empty one, the golden grille slid back and the lift ascended.

'Level One, Minister for Magic and support staff,' the same woman's voice said as the grille sprang open.

Percy stepped out of the lift and Anton walked next to him, the Weasley walked down the hall until he came to an office labelled Cornelius Fudge, Minister for Magic. He knocked on the door and pushed open with a flourish, standing back he gestured for Anton to enter.

Anton swept through the door and came to a halt in front of Fudge's desk, next to the Minister stood Dolores Umbridge in her usual pink.

'Ah Mr Lukyen,' Fudge said 'if you would take a seat, that'll be all Percy.'

As Percy left the room Anton sat down in the chair facing Fudge.

'Now we have summoned you to talk about the events on the 10th June' Fudge said seriously 'and how you came to be fighting Mr Pettigrew. But first it would be better if you could tell us where you have been staying this past month.'

'I've been staying with friends,' Anton replied having already decided he would tell the Minister the bare minimum of his story.

'And those friends would be?' Umbridge asked with her girly voice.

'Nothing to do with you,' Anton said smartly enjoying watching her getting peeved.

'If you wished to be cleared of responsibility,' she simpered 'you'd better answer our questions.'

'Is that a threat?' Anton asked calmly 'because I fail to see the relevance of who I've been staying with to this investigation.'

'No it's a slight warning,' Fudge intervened 'let's get on with the next question. How did you get to be fighting Pettigrew?'

'I was ambushed,' Anton replied 'a curse he shot at me hit a transporter I was carrying and we were deposited outside this building.'

'A transporter,' Fudge said looking unconvinced 'where were you when this fight was taking place?'

'In a forest,' Anton said vaguely 'somewhere in East Europe.'

'You don't know where?' Umbridge said raising an eyebrow 'what date was it?'

'10th June,' Anton said looking at her with an expression of confusion.

'So the transporter- which I might add is a regulated device, brought you straight to outside the Ministry.' Fudge said closely.

'Yes,' Anton replied 'that was lucky.'

'Right,' Fudge said standing up seemingly satisfied with Anton's story of events 'why did you kill Pettigrew?'

'He was trying to kill me,' Anton said keeping eye contact with the minister 'I'm not a natural killer, the fact I had to take another person's life...' he trailed off convincingly 'it pains me deeply.'

'If it had not been revealed that Pettigrew was a former Death Eater you would be being charged with murder right now,' Fudge paused 'however as he is now classified as a criminal you are lucky enough not to be going to Azkaban this instant.'

'Is that would could have happened,' Anton said pretending to look shocked 'I didn't realise.'

'I'm sure you didn't,' Umbridge threw in looking annoyed.

'I didn't,' Anton repeated calmly 'was there anything else?'

'Albus Dumbledore came to visit you while you were in hospital,' Fudge said 'moments after he had left you disappeared, can you tell me why Dumbledore went to visit you?'

'You'll have to ask him that,' Anton answered 'I have no idea why.'

'You have no idea why Dumbledore came to see you,' Umbridge said unconvinced 'I find that debatable.'

'Albus has recently been asked to leave the Wizengamot,' Fudge continued 'he is probably not the best person to place trust in.'

'Why because he believes that Voldemort has returned?' Anton asked ignoring the blanches 'why does that make him less trustworthy than any other?'

'He is delusional,' Fudge exclaimed 'and it would be better if you told us exactly what he said to you and why it caused you to leave St Mungo's.'

'I didn't leave because of Dumbledore,' Anton said pretending to look surprised 'I left due to private matter which I will not discuss and does not have any relevance to this meeting whatsoever.'

'Hem Hem,' Umbridge cut in and Anton was hard pressed to suppress a grimace 'I think we will be the judge of that.'

'I suppose you believe this madcap idea that You-Know-Who is back then,' Fudge said impatiently 'and who is the fool there I ask you.'

'That Minister, no offence would be you,' Anton said ignoring the looks of outrage 'it is a bigger fool who ignores all the possibilities and allows his fears to cloud his judgements.'

'Well!' Fudge said his temper rising 'who exactly are you to dare to call me a fool, you will be sorry indeed when the Ministry is able to take control of Hogwarts' he glanced at Umbridge who was smirking.

Anton sat back with a smile, they didn't know that Dumbledore had already employed him, the minister was still under the impression he was putting Umbridge up for the position of Defence Against the Dark Arts.

A knock came at the door and Fudge yelled 'Come in!'

Dumbledore swept through the door looking supremely unconcerned with the glares he was getting.

'Afternoon Cornelius,' he said eyes twinkling 'I have come personally to tell you the good news.'

'And what would that be?' Fudge said still glaring at the headmaster.

'There is no need for Madam Umbridge to degrade herself to the role of teacher in September.' Dumbledore beamed and Anton was biting his lip in an effort not to laugh at the looks of their faces 'I have found someone willing to take on the role.'

'You've found someone!' Fudge seethed.

'Oh yes he's is excellent for the position,' Dumbledore nodded 'and I am pleased to say he has readily accepted the challenge.'

'Hem Hem,' Umbridge interrupted smiling sweetly 'may I remind you Educational Decree No.22...'

'The ministry will supply a candidate if I am unable to procure one,' Dumbledore smiled 'I have however Cornelius, found one, so that is something we can all say was a stroke of luck.'

'Indeed,' Fudge said doing an admirable impression of Vernon Dursley.

'Mr Lukyen,' Dumbledore said as if he hadn't known Anton would be there 'what a surprise to see you here, I trust you are well?'

'Quite,' Anton smiled 'how are you?'

'I'm fine Anton,' Dumbledore replied outwardly oblivious to the angry looks they were getting as they continued with there charade 'what brings you to the ministry today?'

'I was summoned,' Anton answered ignoring both Fudge and Umbridge 'my actions towards Peter Pettigrew,'

'A noble act to obtain an innocent mans release,' Dumbledore continued 'at least Sirius was healthily reimbursed for the hardship he endured.'

'Have you quite finished?' Fudge next to spat 'just get out of my sight Lukyen, you are hereby cleared of murder, the ministry has decided not to pursue any other charges.'

'Great I'll be going then,' Anton said jumping out of the chair 'hopefully I won't be seeing you again'- this directed mainly at Umbridge.

As he left the room he heard Dumbledore saying.

'Good day to you Cornelius, Madam Umbridge. I really must get going, only a month before everyone returns to school.'

Dumbledore left the office and headed over to where Anton was waiting looking somewhat amused.

'Headmaster?' he said smiling.

'Shall we walk?' Dumbledore said ignoring Anton's question and walking down the hall 'I feel sometimes as if everyone is always wanting to talk and listen to me' he said jovially.

Anton followed the man who obviously knew his way around the government building and he also picked up the mans hint about not talking about anything important.

'The Minister,' Anton said clearly 'was under the impression that you had come to see me in St Mungo's and told me something important that was connected with me leaving.'

'Really,' Dumbledore said in a voice of utter surprise 'how peculiar that he would think something like that.'

Anton nodded seriously 'and congratulations' he continued 'with finding someone suitable for the post at your school.'

'Anton,' Dumbledore twinkled 'I could not be more delighted with who I have appointed, no doubt the minister will be applying some of his best aurors to discover who it is and no doubt he will find out in a very short amount of time.'

They walked back to the elevators and when they got back to the Atrium Dumbledore led the way to a fire.

'May I suggest you come to Hogwarts before returning home,' he said meaningfully.

Anton nodded as he recognised the need to keep 12 Grimmauld Place a secret.

'Excellent,' Dumbledore said gesturing to the flames 'after you.'

Anton arrived in the Headmasters office and a few moments later Dumbledore arrived dusting himself off as he stepped out of the grate.

'Now Anton,' he said walking to the door 'I thought I might take this opportunity to show you your accommodation for the next year. Unless of course you stay longer though many are convinced this job is cursed.'

Anton matched the older mans pace as he marched down the familiar corridor leading to the Grand Staircase.

'The house-elf's,' he said conversationally 'have been cleaning out the rooms over the last week, I'm told it took quite a while for them to get rid of the remnants of Polyjuice potion, it appears our last teacher was less than careful where he spilt it.'

Anton felt a slight grimace at the thought of sleeping in the same room that had housed two Death Eaters and Gilderoy Lockhart, though then again, he slept and lived in worse places.

Dumbledore led Anton towards the third floor (A/N please tell me if this is wrong) and when they reached there he walked a short distance up the corridor before stopping at a plain unmarked door, Dumbledore tapped his wand on the handle and pushed the door open, stepping back he allowed for Anton to enter first.

Anton's first thought was 'Wow' the door had opened onto a living area that contained all the grandeur associated with Hogwarts. It was a medium sized room with a large settee in the centre a chandelier hung from the ceiling and the walls were covered with bookcases each filled to the brim with books. The colour scheme was red and gold which was one of the things that made Anton smile, a heavy antique desk and chair were positioned to face out of the window out of which the Quidditch pitch was visible.

Anton went over to one of the two doors that led off from the room, one was a decently sized bathroom in marble, a sink that was a glass water feature, a shower that resembled a waterfall and a large pool bath Anton knew he would never use for fear of the effects of prolonged water contact.

The other door was his bedroom, a large four poster bed was centred in the middle with cabinets on each side and a heavy wardrobe in the corner, again red and gold was obviously the theme.

Anton smiled his approval at the head as he decided he was feeling extremely pleased with how his living quarters looked.

'I never expected anything on this scale,' he said to the twinkling headmaster.

'We treat our staff well,' Dumbledore replied 'I only wish sometimes that some of them repay the school in a more favourable way.'

Anton inclined his head in understanding at the older man's words, he had never before considered what it was like to be let down constantly by teachers he had thought he had trusted.

'Well now you've seen this would you like to see your classroom?' Dumbledore asked turning to leave.

'Yeh that'd be good,' Anton consented 'I am quite interested to see what I can do with my office.'

'Ah the impact factor,' Dumbledore said knowledgeably 'all good teachers have them, and the effect they can have is often worth more than a hundred detentions.'

'I want something unique,' Anton said thoughtfully an idea forming in his mind 'though nothing stupid.'

'Well you have the best part of a month to figure it out,' Dumbledore said pleasantly 'now is there anything else you'd like to see, perhaps the lake?'

Anton was unable to suppress a small shudder which did not go unnoticed by Dumbledore who was watching him carefully.

'Water,' Anton said thinking of his phrasing 'is best in short doses, for me.'

'Fires greatest enemy,' Dumbledore said understanding 'you happen to be the second fire Elemental I have known in my lifetime, when in prolonged contact with water she often was quite ill.'

'It must run in the element,' Anton said wryly 'we all had our weaknesses, yet mine and the traitors were more debilitating to our health.'

'Which may give us the chance to beat her,' Dumbledore said 'now how about seeing your classroom and office.'

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An hour and a half later Anton thought he had seen everywhere possible in Hogwarts which included a tour of the kitchens, he had the feeling that Dumbledore was keeping him from returning to the house.

‘Professor,’ he said turning to the man as they walked along yet another corridor ‘is there something you’re trying to keep me away from?’

‘Am I really that obvious?’ the older man asked amused ‘I have been set the task of keeping you occupied while everyone else prepares the Headquarters?’

‘For what?’ Anton said confused.

‘A surprise,’ Dumbledore twinkled ‘though when we do return would you please act like it is unexpected.’

‘How much longer do you think it will take?’ Anton asked both stunned and flattered by the effort.

‘Shall we take a stroll to Hagrid’s?’ Dumbledore suggested ‘I believe he’s trying to find a home for some of his pets in advance of his departure on his mission.’

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One of the pets turned out to be a salamander that was the only magical creature Hagrid had yet to find a home for.

‘They’re tricky ya see,’ he said keeping out of the way of the salamander’s fiery breath ‘no one really knows what to expect with them.’

Anton was not in the least perturbed about the fire breathing lizard, in fact he was rather interested in it. Kneeling down on the warm grass he held his arm out to the lizard and the meter long creature ran over in its curiosity, the creature let out a snort and coughed a fire burst at Anton’s arm, the fire licked along his arm coiling as if it was a bracelet. Hagrid was seconds away from grabbing a bucket of water when Anton vanished the fire, clicking his fingers he created his own ball of fire and let it hover in the air, the salamander who was still young jumped up and down snapping at it in excitement.

‘What the?’ Hagrid said confused.

‘Rubeus,’ Dumbledore said to the stunned gamekeeper ‘I believe you’ve found a home for your salamander.’

‘What!’ Anton said looking up ‘I don’t know anything about looking after salamander’s.’

‘They’re quite easy,’ Hagrid said his knowledge of the creature coming through ‘she’s not hard to look after just make sure you give her lots of red meat and vinegar to drink.’

So that’s how Anton got a young female salamander as a pet, Dumbledore said it would be better if she remained at the castle until term began and recruited a couple of house-elf’s to look after Pyra who looked incredibly sad when Anton had to leave, she whined and followed the young wizard at a distance until Anton set off a couple of fire balls to distract her, much to Hagrid’s and Dumbledore’s amusement.

It was well past six when they returned to the fire, before Anton stepped into the flames Dumbledore stopped him and handed him a small silver wrapped object. Anton looked at it in confusion.

‘This was left to me by the Fire Elemental I used to know,’ Dumbledore informed him ‘when she died she decided it would be better if I looked after it as I helped create it.’

Anton tore the silver paper off and came across a pendant, the chain was black gold and the pendant was a red glittering swirl set in a black stone, Anton touched it nervously something about the pendant just called to him.

‘What is it?’ he asked curiously.

‘It is a Fire stone,’ Dumbledore replied ‘it loses the redness if your reserves are low and it turns completely black if you are in a position where you could die, it also has a few other uses but I trust you’ll discover those for yourself.’

Anton dropped it over his head and surveyed it wonder, it would certainly save him a lot of effort estimating how long he could stay in contact with water.

'I don't know what to say,' he muttered 'thank you.'

'Quite alright Anton,' Dumbledore beamed 'think of it as a belated birthday present, now get going or you'll be late.'

Anton stepped into the fireplace before dropping the floo powder as usual he ignored the flames that he was waist deep in.

'12 Grimmauld Place' he said clearly before being sucked from the office.

Chapter Ten

Anton landed with a thud in the grate of Sirius's hall, it was absolutely silent in the dim house, Anton adjusted his eyes so he could see a little better and slowly walked down the corridor, muffled whispers seemed to be coming from the dining room.

'Hello?' he said loudly and the whispers immediately stopped.

'We're in here Anton,' came Mrs Weasley's voice from the dining room 'we thought we'd have dinner in here tonight.'

Anton headed down the corridor and placed his hand on the handle he turned it and pushed it open to complete darkness, he was about to conjure a ball of flame but suddenly the lights flicked on.

'Surprise!' screamed the crowd of people.

Anton felt his mouth drop open, he had known about the surprise yet he was still surprised. A huge banner hung from the ceiling with the words.

Happy belated Birthday Anton!

Underneath someone had scrawled.

Congratulation on not being accused of Murder! Anton could immediately guess who had written that.

The large old table was covered in dishes of food and presents, streamers were draped across the table and hung from the ceiling. In the centre of the table a huge cake was positioned, it was in the shape of a ball of fire with red icing, on the top Happy belated Birthday Anton was written in black icing.

There were at least twenty people in the room including the teenagers, the Weasley's, Kinglsey, Tonks, Mad-Eye Moody, Lupin and Sirius as well as quite a few more and one woman who looked in her early thirties that Anton couldn't remember seeing before.

'I think he's surprised,' Lupin laughed at Anton's stunned face.

'I..erm...uh,' Anton stuttered out 'I don't know what to say...Wow.'

'So you like it then,' Mrs Weasley smiled happily.

'Of course,' Anton said gratefully 'but you didn't have to go to all this trouble just for me.'

'Nonsense,' Mr Weasley said cheerfully 'it was the least we could do.'

Anton smiled feeling honoured that they had gone to all the trouble 'Thank you so much,' he said sincerely 'I can't remember the last time I had a birthday cake let alone a party.'

'Presents!' Sirius said excitedly 'you have to open the presents.'

'You got me presents,' Anton smiled even more 'now I'm even more stumped for words.'

'Just open them,' Tonks said loudly 'there should be more but no one else knows it was your birthday.'

'More,' Anton said faintly surveying the pile which was bigger than anything he'd ever had before 'I...' he trailed off.

'For crying out loud open them,' George cried 'the suspense is killing me.'

Grinning Anton took the first present from the Weasley's, pulling it open it revealed a knitted jumper in a deep red with a flame on it, he smiled broadly at the simplicity and the memories it conjured.

'Thank you,' he said sincerely giving Mrs Weasley a hug and shaking Arthur's hand.

It took at least half an hour to open each present, he'd gotten a brilliant metal contraption from Mad-Eye that whirred every time a lie was told.

'I thought it would come in useful,' he'd said knowingly.

The rest of the things were items such as chocolate and small wizarding novelty items, the last present was a flat rectangle that was at least a metre long and about seventy five centimetres across, it was wrapped in white paper and the message at the top said it was from Tonks, Sirius and Lupin. It also said drawn by Mylee Bones.

'We thought we'd do something that would be special to you,' Lupin said as Anton began opening the paper.

The three adults and the woman Anton didn't recognise all watched nervously as he pulled the paper off.

The breath caught in his throat as he realised what it was and his eyes widened in shock.

It was a portrait but it wasn't moving, on a plain black background the the artist had drawn them as Elementals.

Ginny/Gia was in the middle smiling out of the darkness her hands were clutching her green and black sword, on her right side Ron/Rhoan stood with one arm wrapped around his sister's shoulders and the other holding his own silvery grey sword. Anton was drawn on the left side with his arm placed on Rhoan's shoulder, his black and red sword was hanging loosely from his hand. It had been drawn to look as if the darkness was shying away from the three friends.

'Oh my God,' Anton whispered his fingers trembling as he touched the picture.

'Do you like it?' Sirius asked sounding slightly anxious.

'It's exactly as I remember them,' Anton said softly 'how can I ever repay you for this' he said looking at the thick gold frame.

'You deserve it,' Sirius smiled relieved Anton liked it.

'Thank you,' Anton said to everyone with such genuineness he looked much younger 'thank you so much.'

As Mrs Weasley served the food half an hour later Anton found himself talking to the woman who had introduced herself as Mylee Bones, she was slim and attractive with long curling brown hair, she was quite shy but seemed pleasant enough.

'Thanks for drawing it,' Anton said appreciatively 'how did you get involved with it?'

'I knew Sirius, Lupin and Tonks at school,' she admitted blinking her hazel eyes 'we were all in different years but they remembered me when they were looking for an artist, I also dated Sirius for a couple of years.'

'That was lucky,' Anton smiled.

'It was,' she agreed 'I lost contact with Sirius after I moved from school, but I always wanted to look him up again, but then of course he was arrested and I didn't know what to think.'

Anton noticed she was watching his Godfather carefully as he laughed with Lupin and Tonks.

'He's single,' Anton smiled understanding the look in her eyes.

'Oh no,' she flustered 'he's got a lot on it would just confuse things for him.'

'Most would say that you couldn't know that unless you asked him,' Anton said egging her on slightly.

'I couldn't,' she insisted but with slightly less conviction.

'If you insist,' Anton smiled 'but one drink couldn't hurt could it?'

'One drink,' she muttered under her breath.

Anton smiled to himself, when she had wondered off still deep in thought to talk to Mrs Weasley Sirius ambled over with a piece of cake.

'Good birthday?' he asked.

'One of the best,' Anton answered smiling 'Mylee's nice.'

'Yeh she is,' Sirius agreed 'she was two years below me and Lupin.'

'I think she's got the hot's for you,' Anton continued not missing the sudden interest in Sirius's face.

'Really,' he laughed 'I would never have realised, are you sure?'

'Well there's no harm in asking,' Anton said eating some of his own cake.

'I was a convicted murderer,' Sirius said gruffly 'she would not want to go out with me.'

'Cleared of all charges,' Anton said 'what's wrong with an innocent man wanting a drink.'

'A drink,' Sirius murmured looking over at Mylee who chose that exact moment to glance over herself 'excuse me' he said to Anton heading over to the brunette.

Anton smiled to himself again as he saw Sirius talking to Mylee and her own eager replies.

'Easy,' he said to himself as he headed over to the table for more food.

A bad mood was easily detectable in the house the next morning from irritable replies to the crashing of pots as Mrs Weasley cleaned the breakfast plates with a furious vigour. Sirius hadn't bothered to come out of his room and Lupin had chosen to leave the house to

escape the atmosphere that had arrived with Harry's birthday, Mrs Weasley had next to forced his potions down his throat and the only way Anton could see of escaping was to copy Lupin and leave. Anton took his sword with him even though he wouldn't need it, the pendant Dumbledore had given him was hanging over his t-shirt and in the warm weather he had chosen jeans to wear as he was not sensitive to higher temperatures.

Anton closed the door with a definite snap as he felt the freedom of the outside world, he chose as a spur of the moment decision to travel to Diagon Alley even though he didn't need anything.

As he entered the familiar cobble stoned Alley he walked morosely towards Fortesque's Ice Cream Parlour, after obtaining a quintuplet chocolate ice cream he sat down at a table and started reading the paper he had just purchased.

'Happy Birthday Anton,' a voice said suddenly next to his ear.

Anton thrust himself from the chair and did a roll across the floor turning to face the owner of the voice as he did so.

'What do you want,' he spat angrily at his opponent.

'What do you think I want,' the blonde and blue hair girl threw back 'I want to see you suffer and burn.'

'Aww Felly you cut me up,' Anton returned rising from his position on the floor 'I didn't realise you wanted to kill me that badly.'

'Well I can't kill you here,' Ofelia/Hermione said sitting back in the chair Anton had just vacated and smoothing her blue robes out 'to much unnecessary attention, which neither of us wants...yet.'

'So what do you propose?' Anton asked his hand on his wand in his pocket as he pulled an other chair out from under the table 'shootout at dawn?'

'Don't be crass,' Ofelia snapped irritably 'I was suggesting we go to a neutral ground and fight there.'

'Like I can trust you,' Anton said repulsively 'you betrayed us, and you think I'd go somewhere unknown with you.'

'If we don't go somewhere soon,' Ofelia replied calmly her personality far removed from the young Hermione living at Sirius's house 'I will kill that little girl in the pushchair over there.'

Anton turned his head slightly so he could see the little girl who was only about one slurping happily on her own ice cream.

'What happened to you?' he said disgusted.

'War,' Ofelia sneered 'I was more willing to compromise to survive, now are we going or am I going to have to kill that baby?'

'Where to?' Anton asked gritting his teeth seeing no way out.

'Now where did your element of fun and adventure,' she mocked 'some would say that it died with that worthless lump you called a friend.'

Anton snarled in anger and drew his wand out.

Ofelia shook her head 'if you do that I will have no qualms in killing her.'

'As if you would anyway,' Anton said growing even more angry 'you wasted no time did you, away from one Dark Lord you take a month in getting to know the other.'

'Wasting time is wasting power,' Ofelia said smoothly 'if you had only recognised that I wouldn't have to kill you.'

'Many have tried,' Anton said tauntingly 'how many death attempts was it at last count?'

'The number is irrelevant,' she said getting more enraged 'now get up we're going for a walk.'

Anton stood up his wand at his side, the comfortable weight of his blade on his back reminding him he was not alone.

‘Now move,’ she hissed.

Anton reluctantly moved away from the table ‘where to?’

‘We’re going to walk a hundred yards north,’ she muttered ‘then twenty yards west into a disused alley.’

‘Then what?’ Anton asked.

‘That would spoil the surprise,’ she replied ‘get moving.’

Anton followed her instructions moving a hundred yards north then twenty yards west as directed, he stepped into the alley his wand raised high and a ball of flame alight in his other hand. He faced his nemesis with an angry satisfaction.

‘Now what is going to happen?’ he said conversationally.

‘You choose a place,’ Ofelia consented ‘wherever we go the outcome will be the same.’

‘Aren’t you the confident one,’ Anton snorted ‘fine, I choose...the field in which the Quidditch world cup was held last year.’

‘As you wish,’ Ofelia said ‘start on arrival.’

‘Fine,’ Anton said disappearing with a crack seconds before she did the same.

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The sun was high in the sky when they reached the now empty field, Anton pulled his trainers off and let his feet sink into the warm earth feeling its power, he pulled his sword and launched into an immediate attack. He swung the sword down at his former best friend, she threw her own silver blue blade up to meet the strike. The blades met with a

glitter of fire sparks and water, pulling his sword back Anton struck again and his strike was instantly met by Ofelia.

'I saved you for last so you could see how you failed,' she said cruelly 'and now I will kill you.'

'We're evenly matched you idiot,' Anton retorted 'the only way one of us will win is if the other gives up'.

'Which you will,' Ofelia snarled throwing a jet of water at him.

'Think again,' Anton came back with, deflecting the water spurt with a burst of fire.

They continued to fight for at least ten minutes more, every time one of them would get a jab in with their sword the other would call their element to dance along their skin and heal the small wound.

Ofelia was growing more and more furious with every passing moment as she realised she was not about to succeed, Anton just looked quietly determined.

With a final scream of frustration Ofelia threw a huge fountain of water at Anton and disappeared, the water crashed down on Anton who only managed to deflect two thirds of the water. His body instantaneously rejected the presence of raw Elemental water and heated his body temperature to over three hundred degrees in a second, almost as quickly it returned to normal and Anton threw up the remnants of his breakfast on the field reminding him just how much he hated water.

Gasping and shivering he regained his control in and stopped the judders racking his body, the pendant he was wearing had dimmed in colour which meant his magical reserves were slightly lower than they had been, taking a big gulp of air he disappeared and not a second too soon as the traitor returned with a contingent of Death Eaters.

Anton arrived on the top step of Sirius's house, he paused a moment to compose himself before knocking on the door and entering. Relieved everywhere was quiet Anton limped up the stairs ignoring

the grass and mud stains he was covered in, he was still holding both his wand and sword. traipsing to his room he ran into Hermione, Ginny and Ron who all stared at his dishevelled state.

‘What happened to you?’ Ginny asked surprised.

‘Exercise,’ Anton rasped ‘knew it was a bad idea.’

‘Exercise did that,’ Ron said unconvinced.

‘It was strenuous,’ Anton said passing the trio who all eyed his sword warily ‘next time I’ll go to the gym.’

He knew none of them believed him yet he still continued towards his room

‘See you later,’ he muttered.

He distinctly heard Hermione ask ‘do you think he’s been on Order business?’

And then Ron answered ‘well I don’t think he ended up looking like he’d gone a few rounds with Quirrel’s troll by doing exercise.’

‘I wonder what he was doing,’ Ginny’s voice said and Anton cut the sounds of voices off by closing his door.

Breathing heavily he leaned against the shut door and closed his eyes, she was here and she was actively hunting him out, she also had the knowledge of everything that had happened and was about to happen.

‘Fate,’ he whispered ‘what am I supposed to do?’

Nothing happened, no beam of light enveloped him no answers came for his questions.

‘Anton,’ knock came at the door ‘you’re on watch tonight or had you forgotten?’

'Who am I swapping with?' Anton asked Mad-Eye through the wood.

'Kingsley,' he barked back 'be down in fifteen minutes I'll lend you my spare invisibility cloak.'

'Got it,' Anton replied rubbing his face tiredly with the back of his hand, looking down he realised with a jolt that his feet were bare, he'd left his trainers in the field.

When he heard Moody clunking away he pushed off from the door and dropped his sword on the floor, he pulled his dirty clothes off and placed them in his basket. Opening a drawer he pulled out his combat clothes and tugged them over his aching body ignoring the bruises that were starting to form following his fight.

Sighing in tiredness he glanced at the clock it was half three, by the time he got on duty it would be four, an eight hour shift would take him to midnight and at least quarter past before he got back. Almost slumping in fatigue he shook his head before pulling his door open and headed down.

He pulled the cloak closer around him as he strolled up and down the dark corridor his dragon hide boots moving silently. With the range his eyes worked at he could see the corridor in the ministry department as if it was lit up completely. Two hours had passed so far and he was more than a little bored, he looked at the locked door, what he would have done to have known what was behind the door when he was in his fifth year.

A feeling of foreboding crept up his shoulder blades, Anton shook his head in an attempt to dispel the feeling, then he glanced back around the corridor before deciding what to do next. Standing next to the wall he leaned on it with his legs crossed at the ankles, and stood there watching...for six hours unblinking.

When Anton was eventually relieved of his duty he appeared to Sirius's and the collapsed into a couch in the living room within seconds he had fallen into a deep sleep.

He was woken up by the sunlight streaming in through the window, his eyes were still on maximum dilation to allow as much light in as possible, the fact that it was extremely bright outside meant in the couple of seconds it had taken him to adjust them they were left red, bloodshot and sore.

Anton pushed himself up from the chair and stumbled yawning into the kitchen and food, he didn't know why it was but he felt as if he'd had a thousand ants crawling in his brain all talking at once and the effect was surreal.

'Anton,' Mrs Weasley greeted, she turned to look at him and her eyes widened 'duty?'

'Yeh,' he nodded 'I'm just glad I don't have to do it for a while.'

'Well here's some breakfast,' she said piling his plate high 'I was just about to call the kids it's not even eight yet.'

When she left the room Anton shook his head again, it was like his mind was trying to tell him something a ghost of something that used to be familiar, something he couldn't quite put his finger on.

Chapter Eleven

Anton sat pouring over heavy tomb with the small writing and dwindling light making it hard for him to read the Latin inscriptions, voices from outside his room had him listening.

'No Dung's watching Harry tonight,' Mrs Weasley said to someone 'he just left.'

Anton lurched up in horror as he realised what the date was.

'Stupid, Stupid!' he muttered jumping off his bed and grabbing his sword 'how could I have been so Damn Stupid!'

He ran from his room and barrelled down the stairs, at the bottom the five teenagers were a starting to come up the steps and between them they blocked Anton's path. They noticed Anton and began to move but too slowly, Anton jumped onto the banister and slid down the wooden rail with a screech as his dragon hide boots connected, when he hit the bottom he jumped off and hit the ground running, never noticing the appreciative looks he received.

He ran to the front door and slammed it open running out he disperedated with a crack but not before shouting 'tell your Mum that Dung left early!'

Anton thudded into the lit street of Privet Drive and searched for number four, the garden was empty Harry had already left, Anton ran down the street and towards Wysteria Walk, he ran flat out trying to remember the layout of Little Whinging he desperately put on a burst of speed and sprinted to the alley that connected it with Magnolia Crescent, the air was cold and clammy and he could make out Dementor's at the mouth of the alley.

Anton pulled his wand out and yelled as loudly as possible.

'Expecto Patronum!'

A silver animal burst from Anton's wand and crashed into the dementor's with such force they were repelled backwards instantly, and seconds later they vanished into the night. Anton jogged towards the alley and came face to face with his teenage persona.

Harry had raised his wand in anticipation and his mouth was open as if seconds from shouting his own repelling curse, Anton stood there looking positively murderous with his hands on his hips as Mrs Figg ran up behind him.

'Lower your wand,' she said panting at Harry 'he's not about to curse you.'

'What's going on?' Harry asked.

'I'm going to kill Mundungus Fletcher!' she yelled 'it was a damn good job you were here Anton.'

She continued with her tirade word perfect to how Anton recalled it, he had been an idiot, he had allowed for events to continue nearly exactly how they had the first time, Anton felt like thumping himself, if he carried on being this careless then nothing would change and the world of good was in grave peril.

He was jerked out of his thoughts as Mrs Figg bent down and picked up one of Dudley's huge arms.

'Get up, you useless lump, get up!'

Anton stepped forward and grabbed one of Dudley's arms while Harry grabbed the other, together they heaved him up.

'We need to let Dumbledore know so he can act immediately,' Anton said ignoring Harry's nervous expression 'I left a message with Molly so he might know something's wrong by now.'

'MUNDUNGUS FLETCHER I AM GOING TO KILL YOU!' she screamed.

With a crack the man appeared and Mrs Figg shrieked blue murder at him before sending him to Dumbledore.

The three of them continued to Privet Drive with the neighbour giving Harry the spiel about Dumbledore wanting him to avoid using magic at all costs, when they reached the house Mrs Figg turned to Anton.

'I'm going straight home,' she said 'to await any further instructions.'

She trotted off across the street with her slippers flapping.

'We'd better get this lummo back to his parents,' Anton said irritably tightening his grip on the boy.

'What's going on?' Harry asked his face a mix of annoyance and worry 'what's been going on this last month?'

'Not out here,' Anton replied as they neared the door, he rang the doorbell and turned to Harry 'I have to go,' he said, 'everything will be ok.'

'But what am I supposed to do?' Harry said indignantly.

'Don't leave the house,' Anton warned passing the whole of Dudley's weight to Harry 'Dumbledore's working it out this very minute, I know you feel deceived but trust me it was for the best.'

'See you soon,' he said troubled, stepping off the step he disappeared as the front door opened, he felt bad lying, it hadn't been for the best.

He got back to headquarters to find it teeming with every member of the Order possible, they ran from room to room calling to each other. Mrs Weasley was standing in the centre of the kitchen yelling at Mundungus with such ferocity that everyone else was making sure they avoided getting in the way.

'ALBUS SAID WE WERE TO MAKE SURE HE DIDN'T DO ANY MAGIC UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES!' she shouted 'SO YOU

GO AND BUY STOLEN CAULDRONS AND DEMENTORS ATTACK!
HARRY WAS SECONDS AWAY FROM DOING MAGIC!

'Molly be reasonable,' Dung tried to say 'he didn't do any magic did he?'

'BE REASONABLE!' she roared 'WE'LL JUST SEE ABOUT REASONABLE.'

'Is Dumbledore at the ministry?' Anton asked Lupin quietly.

'He left seconds before you got back,' Lupin replied as they walked towards the basement 'Mad-Eye's giving people instructions as we speak.'

They hurried down the steps and saw the basement in a hive of activity

'Anton!' Moody barked 'I need you to go under and see if you can spot any Death Eaters that look as if they know something, there are people already out.'

'Got it,' Anton said turning round and running back up the stairs.

He grabbed his cloak this time before he left and when he disappeared he had a location in mind.

It was pitch black when Anton arrived back in the Albanian Forests, he crept through the rough undergrowth heading for the sounds of voices, skirting around a clearing he peered in-between the trees to try and see what was happening.

At least a hundred Death Eaters were standing in their infamous circle shuffling nervously, Voldemort stood in the centre with Nagini wrapped around his feet, Ofelia was next to him her features cold and stoic rivulets of water ran around her feet pooling underneath her blue robes.

'Well?' Voldemort hissed menacingly 'what went wrong tonight?'

'He was protected My Lord,' one said hesitantly.

'Crucio!' Voldemort said flicking his wand 'I would say it's obvious he was protected, the question remains...I was assured he was not being guarded, so why did a wizard protect the brat.'

No one spoke a word which only angered Voldemort further.

'Answer ME!' he screamed.

'My Lord we were assured three would be enough,' a familiar blonde offered.

Voldemort inflicted the crucio on him without a second of afterthought. Anton pulled back from his hiding place and as quickly and as quietly as possible he stole away.

'Fire boy,' a mirthless voice taunted him when he'd reached about a five minute walk away.

'Felly,' Anton said cheerfully turning to see her 'and I had hoped not to see you again so soon.'

'I'm going to let you live today,' she said decisively 'my life would be so much less interesting if I didn't have you to fight with.'

'I'm flattered,' Anton snapped his hand safely on his wand 'but if I have the chance I will kill you outright.'

'You wound me,' she smiled coldly 'I knew you couldn't resist protecting baby Harry' she mocked 'it's almost poetic.'

'Why didn't you tell Voldemort his plan would fail?' Anton asked perplexed.

'Why bother when I win anyway,' Ofelia smirked 'unless you make a dramatic difference I don't see you as a threat, after all you've already failed once before.'

'It's your turn to lose this time,' Anton snapped.

She smiled coldly before asking 'want to dance?'

'Dance,' Anton said cautiously 'won't your master miss you?'

'Muggle fighting,' she continued ignoring Anton's comment 'no magic or elemental powers.'

'How do I know I can trust you to play fair?' Anton asked raising his eyebrows speculatively.

'You don't,' she said dropping her sword on the ground followed by her wand 'why are you frightened of me beating you?' Ofelia/Hermione asked dropping into a fighting stance.

Anton took his hand off his wand and raised his hands into a block, his sword was safely stowed against his back.

'Me first,' Ofelia said punching out.

Anton blocked the fist and for a short while they traded blows in some light sparing before they got into the serious fighting. Anton threw a round house kick at the traitor which smashed into her side.

Ofelia gritted her teeth and slammed Anton with a side kick. They pounded each other mercilessly hitting hard and painfully. A fist landed in Anton's eye and then the other split his lip, a bruise was already darkening on Ofelia's pale face.

They withdrew panting, Anton raised his guard once more but before he could strike again Voldemort's voice rang out.

'Ofelia, where are you?'

Anton jerked his head to the direction the voice came from, noticing he was distracted Ofelia jumped at slammed both of her feet onto Anton's chest. He fell backwards into the undergrowth and when he

leaped back up she was gone. Cursing to himself he dissaparated with an angry crack.

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Anton walked tiredly through the door, the house was quiet but the vanishing figures from by the basement door told Anton there was a meeting going on. He stretched onto his tiptoes and then shook his arms to wake himself up, suitably loosened Anton pushed the door open and thudded down the steps.

The Order looked like they were finishing up, Dumbledore was just sitting down when Anton entered, he looked as tired as Anton felt and he looked wearily at the Order.

‘This shows that Voldemort is waiting for every opportunity to take the upper hand,’ he finished.

As Anton walked closer, more people noticed him.

‘The Dementors were definitely ordered by Voldemort,’ he said ‘but he didn’t order them to do it, and he was a pissed as hell that they screwed up.’

‘You saw Voldemort?’ Dumbledore said suddenly alert ‘where?’

‘Forests in Albania’ Anton supplied touching his bleeding lip gingerly ‘him and all his worthless followers.’

‘What happened?’ Hestia Jones asked ‘did they spot you? Is that why you’re injured?’

‘No, they didn’t spot me,’ Anton said ‘this was done by the wicked witch of the ocean, man she’s a bitch, I’d forgotten about her double kick.’

‘Are you hurt?’ Molly Weasley said worriedly.

'It's superficial,' Anton said shrugging her concerns off 'she looks worse, she'll have a hard time explaining to Voldemort why I escaped and why she didn't call for back-up.'

'She didn't call for back-up,' Dumbledore said perturbed 'why not?'

'She wanted the satisfaction of pummelling me herself,' Anton said ruefully 'in fact her exact words were 'my life would be so much less interesting if I didn't have you to fight with', she's a real piece of work.'

Dumbledore nodded in acceptance before saying 'we need to move Harry here to make sure he's kept safe, we were just discussing how we'll move him, we can't risk another mistake.'

'How are you going to do that?' Anton asked pretending to look interested.

'We're flying,' Mad-Eye said gruffly 'good thing you've got a broom.'

'I'm going?' Anton said slightly surprised.

'Course you are,' Mad-Eye replied 'we're going on the twelfth.'

'The twelfth,' Anton repeated, he dredged through his memories trying to remember the date he had been picked on, for the life of him he couldn't recall if Hermione had known about it... 'Wait a minute' he thought, she was waiting with Ron upstairs, and he couldn't remember a point where he had ever told her about them flying- he was safe.

'Problem?' Sturgis Podmore said.

'No,' Anton shook his head relieved 'no problem at all.'

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It was pitch black, they were all standing in the garden of the house with their broom clasped next to them.

‘You know the plan!’ Mad-Eye shouted his eye glowing ‘first group surround second group wait to provide support if needed! You got that?’

‘Yes!’ came the loud reply.

‘Right then,’ he barked ‘let’s get moving!’

‘Anton mounted his broom and rose quickly into the air rejoicing in the sensation of freedom it gave him, the wind whistled through his hair and the next second they were off.

They hurtled over rooftops each person travelling high to prevent anybody muggle or otherwise from spotting them. Anton noticed Sirius with a subtle smile on his face and Anton suspected he wasn’t the only one enjoying the occasion, he had also noticed that Sirius was definitely smiling more lately which could or could not be connected to the drink he’d had with Mylee, that coupled with his proven innocence and his Godson coming to stay he was positively cheerful.

The cold was biting so Anton took the choice of calling the flames to dance under his skin, where they usually dried residual water they also warmed him in cases such as these. He watched the other members freezing on their brooms and felt a sliver of guilt run across his mind.

‘Bearing North,’ Mad-Eye called breaking through Anton’s thoughts ‘Coming up to Little Whinging.’

They swooped through the air with a couple of flyers looking less than pleased at their method of transport.

‘Heading down,’ Mad-Eye continued ‘First group descend!’

Anton turned his Firebolt down and followed Emmaline Vance as she dropped down in front of him. They hit the ground and dismounted, with Tonks and Sirius reaching the backdoor first.

Anton and a few others waited outside with their wands drawn while the second group remained on their brooms in the air. The smashing off china fractured the night and Anton couldn't help but smile as he thought of Tonks breaking it, he saw the wand lights flicker on out of the corner of his eye. It was happening exactly as it had done all those years before when Anton had felt it firsthand.

The kitchen light clicked on and the sounds of the Order members talking fell on Anton's ears, Anton continued to keep watch as he waited for the time they could leave. Something felt off, something he couldn't quite place as if there was something gnawing at the edge of his mind. He instinctively made sure his mind was clouded from entrance, then again he was never the most proficient Occlumens, he and Rhoan had just learnt a step up from basic.

Before Dumbledore had died he had however sealed Anton's younger memories so that no one except Anton could access his life before his changes, he had been killed before he was able to seal Anton's later memories, everything from the time of seventeen (when they'd altered their features and names) until the age he was now. All five years of information protected only by Anton's own shields.

Anton was distracted from his shielding as the sound of a trunk came thudding down the stairs and more voices in the kitchen. And still the grating sensation continued, ten minutes later the backdoor opened and Lupin stepped out first followed by the other members. When Harry stepped out he had the look of someone who was slightly stunned and was waiting to be woken up, Sirius was standing close to him as if scared he would disappear. Harry looked at Anton with recognition as he clutched at his own broom in his disillusioned state.

'Clear night,' grunted Moody his eye scanning the heavens 'could've done with some cloud cover. Right you boy' he barked at Harry 'we're going to be flying in close formation, I'll be behind, Tonks is in front and Lupin's beneath, the rest are going to be circling us, we don't break ranks for anything, got me? If one of us is killed-'

'Is that likely?' Harry asked but was ignored.

'We don't break ranks, if we're all killed keep flying east and the rear guard will take over.'

'Stop being so cheerful Mad-Eye,' Tonks interrupted 'he'll think we're not taking this seriously.'

'I'm just telling the boy the plan,' growled Moody 'our job is to deliver him safely to Headquarters and if we die in the attempt-.'

'No one's going to die,' Kingsley intervened.

'Mount your brooms that was the first signal,' Lupin said sharply.

Anton rose quickly into the air followed by the others, Harry was surrounded with flyers all circling him continuously. Anton listened for Moody's instruction as he tried to concentrate but his focus was elsewhere, namely on what was nagging at him.

'Muggle looking up everybody get higher!' Moody shouted.

They swung their brooms upwards and climbed further into the sky with any sound lost in the flapping of cloaks.

'We should double back and make sure we're not being followed,' Mad-Eye called at least half an hour later.

'Don't be stupid!' shouted a shivering Tonks 'we're already frozen, lets just get Harry back to Headquarters.'

They descended quickly and once they had dismounted Anton watched as Harry was whisked away to the front door and handed a scrap of paper, Anton hung to the back of the group and waited for the door to be opened, a roll of thunder echoed through the night and a second later the heavens opened.

Anton dashed for the door as quickly as he could make it, repelling the water as best as he could wandlessly. He next to barrelled through the door and stood shivering in the passage heating his skin to stave off the freezing rain water that almost definitely containing raw elemental water .Ofelia was watching.

Anton brushed past Mrs Weasley as she rushed to Harry and jogged up the stairs

‘Anton,’ called Kingsley ‘aren’t you coming to the meeting?’

‘Need to get changed,’ Anton shivered continuing up the stairs ‘I hate being wet.’

Anton yanked off his clothes and dropped them hastily on the floor of his bedroom, calling fire he engulfed his body heating it internally to over 100°C, when he was no longer damp he opened his cupboard and pulled clean dry clothes out and yanked them on. Anton walked to the door and pulled it open, on the next landing he could hear the angry shouting of Harry as he laid into Ron and Hermione, smiling to himself at the oddness of the situation he hurried down the stairs and swiftly entered the basement.

‘It is imperative Harry is kept away from the open,’ Sturgis announced ‘if we limit where he goes we will make it harder for the slimy bastards to attack again.’

‘What about Hogwarts?’ Tonks asked ‘will there be enough protection there for him?’

‘I assure you Nymphadora,’ Dumbledore said calmly ‘Hogwarts is safe, the ministry’s involvement has been prevented so far, but I believe they will try again to place a spy within the walls in time.’

‘At least it’s not Umbridge,’ McGonagall agreed ‘she was intending to make sure not one student in her class used a wand.’

‘Fudge is afraid the students will turn on him,’ Mad-Eye barked in laughter ‘at least we’ve got someone competent teaching them this time, so far there’s been Quirrel who had Voldemort possessing him. Lockhart who didn’t know a hex from a curse and Barty Crouch who also turned out to be a follower of the good Dark Lord.’

'Yeh,' Sirius smiled 'the only person's who's been any good's been Moony.'

'There wasn't much competition,' Lupin said wryly 'I'm expecting Anton will be a popular teacher for the subject.'

Anton grinned to himself at the thought of some of the things he would love to be able to show a class full of eager students, despite the fact that many would be severely frowned upon.

'Another issue,' Dumbledore paused 'is that of the continued guarding of the Department of Mysteries, we know it is still a risk so we cannot stop anytime soon.'

'We've managed it for a while already,' Kingsley voiced 'it may be tough but if it's worthwhile I know I for one will be willing to continue helping and unless someone says otherwise that's what were all agreeing on.'

'Well we obviously can't do it,' Snape said frostily 'I would assume the more intelligent students would figure something out.'

'Well if you're to scared...' Sirius let it hang.

'I'm spying on the Dark Lord,' Snape spat back angrily 'you wouldn't have the guts to do it and it's because of me we you got that report tonight.'

'Gentlemen that is enough,' intervened Dumbledore 'this meeting is over so I suggest you all go and put your feet up.'

Chairs scraped back and people headed quickly to the door.

Anton went down to the kitchen half an hour later with the hopes that the questions had already been answered and the food was now available. He actually managed to arrive just as they finished telling Harry as much as they were able too.

Anton walked in and dropped into a chair knocking back a foul potion as he did so, just as Mrs Weasley was about to send them all to bed the tapping of mail came at the window, confused Sirius yanked it open. A black raven flew in with a message in its beak, it landed in front of Anton and dropped the blue letter before flying back off.

Anton hesitantly picked it up and turned it over, on the back was the seal of water in wax, Anton ran his eyes over the letter checking for any increased levels of magic present in the paper, when no obvious strands showed up he cautiously pried it open and pulled the letter out and read it.

Anton, darling,

Wow completely unexpected that Harry would be moved (Anton grimaced at the sarcastic content) Saw you back on a broom, which makes it quite a while since you last flew though I remember it quite clearly as do the followers you killed.

I'm writing to: one, send you a message which is...Death will not be pleasant. And the second is to send you a present, it's in the envelope.

Love

A friend from another lifetime x

Anton tentatively picked the envelope back up and shook the contents on to his hand, and felt the breath leave his body.

Chapter Twelve

'What is it?' Sirius asked suddenly concerned at the expression on Anton's face.

'She...she...she' Anton stuttered out.

'What is it?' Sirius repeated worried 'what was in the envelope?'

Anton silently dropped what was in his hand onto the table.

'Is that?'

They all stared at the lock of silver hair tied with a ribbon that was lying on the wooden table.

'We were barely adults,' Anton said 'he was too naïve to be betrayed, especially by his best friend.'

'How did she know you were here?' Lupin said reading the letter.

Anton realised the teenagers were listening and looked at Molly hopefully, luckily she took the hint.

'Right get to bed!' she said sternly 'I want lights out in an hour!'

When they had gone Anton said.

'You need to redo the security on this place, make it that no one who has dark intentions can get in, even if they know where we are.'

'But only the people we trust are included in the Fidelius charm,' Kingsley said 'and none of them would give us up.'

'Why take the risk?' Anton said calmly 'we may be safer in the long run, and if we make it the less people know then that would be better. Trust me if that traitor wants something she's going to try damn hard to get it.'

It was Dumbledore who created the actual spell late that night with some helpful suggestions from Anton who'd done the spell on a smaller scale before.

So it was in the early hours of the morning that they all got to bed, before Anton went to sleep he took a swig of dreamless sleep potion and surrendered miserably to the darkness.

The next day Anton was wandering through the house when his younger self came out of a room on his own, when he saw Anton his expression was one of surprise and recognition.

'You're Anton, right?' Harry asked questioningly.

'Yeh,' Anton managed to get out while desperately trying to act normally 'um that's me.'

'Well I just wanted to say thanks,' Harry continued, shuffling his feet 'I don't what would have happened if you hadn't used the patronus.'

'You would have used it,' Anton said recovering quickly 'you would have saved your cousin and yourself, there is no doubt in my mind that you would have done it.'

Harry smiled appreciatively 'thanks, I was beginning to think I only existed to be an easy target for Voldemort.'

'Aren't we all,' Anton said humorously 'though so far he hasn't managed to kill either of us, mind you it was pretty damn close on a few occasions.'

'What would've happened if I had used the patronus?' Harry said 'do you think I probably would have got in much trouble.'

'I'm only guessing,' Anton shrugged smirking to himself at the irony of what was happening 'but I would say...the ministry would have threatened to expel you then they would probably summoned you to a disciplinary hearing in unfair circumstances.'

‘Really?’ Harry said looking stunned.

‘It was a wild guess,’ Anton quickly reiterated mentally punching himself ‘you actually wouldn’t have got more than a warning, it’s the heads job to choose about things such as expulsion.’

Harry opened his mouth to reply but was interrupted by Ron hurrying down the stairs

‘Oi Mate,’ he yelled ‘Mum says we’ve got to clean out the bedrooms on the third floor.’

‘I’ll see you later then,’ Harry said following Ron.

‘Yeh see you later,’ Anton said gazing at his departing former self.

Sirius walked into the hallway whistling happily, Anton smiled as he saw the expression on Sirius's face. He definitely couldn’t recall his Godfather looking that cheerful when he’d done this the first time.

‘What's got you so happy?’ Anton asked smiling.

‘I’m having dinner tonight with Mylee,’ Sirius replied ‘I’d forgotten how much we had in common.’

Anton felt himself laugh as he said ‘carry on like this and people’ll start saying you’re in love.’

‘Maybe I am,’ Sirius said strolling of still with the smile on his face ‘but if you haven’t noticed we’ve only gone out for one drink so far, so I’d say it’s a bit soon for love.’

It was a rush the rest of the month, the kids were kept busy cleaning and getting ready to go back to school and all the adults were working day and night. Anton had been spending nights helping either guard the Department of Mysteries or help find out Voldemort’s next plans. This being so September crept ever closer and on the twenty eighth of August Anton spent the morning packing his trunk

with all the supplies he'd had delivered, he was going to Hogwarts early to set up everything there and get his classroom ready.

Halfway through packing his new robes into the magically expanded trunk Harry passed the bedroom door and stopped when he saw Anton.

'Are you going somewhere?' he asked curiously.

Anton looked up, he and Dumbledore had somehow managed to keep his appointment quiet even though the minister had tried hard to discover who it was.

'I'm doing Dumbledore a favour' he answered 'so I'm going away for a while.'

'Are we going to see you again soon?' Harry said looking surprised Anton was leaving.

'Probably a lot more than you're expecting,' Anton said enigmatically 'and I'll be coming back to see you and the others before you leave for Hogwarts.'

'I suppose you can't tell me what you're going to do,' Harry said hopefully.

'You'll find out really soon,' Anton smiled.

'Well good luck with whatever you're going to do.' Harry grinned walking off.

Anton smiled again and went back to packing his trunk, this time pushing books in one on top of the other, and to his disgust potions.

It was lunchtime when he flooed into his quarters with his luggage, he climbed out of his fireplace and gazed at his living space with childish excitement, dumping his trunk on the floor he kicked it open and began pulling out the items and putting them where he wanted them.

A whine came from the corner of the room, Anton swung around to see Pyra climbing out of her fire proof bed and scurrying over to his side.

'Hello sweetheart,' Anton said softly crouching down to rub her fiery head.

She whined again and coughed a small fireball out, Anton skilfully caught the flames and tossed it like a rubber ball from one hand to the other with the salamander jumping up and trying to seize it.

The door leading to the corridor opened and Professor Dumbledore stepped in smiling as he spotted Anton playing with his pet on the floor.

'We took the precaution of fireproofing your living quarters,' Dumbledore said twinkling 'I see that was definitely a decision well made.'

'I was more prone to causing accidents when I wasn't used to my powers,' Anton admitted 'once I had the misfortune of setting fire to some valuable and irreplaceable books, I was never forgiven for that.'

'And now you have a pet fire lizard...' Dumbledore smiled 'I would suggest she is kept away from the potions in Severus's dungeon.'

'Are all the teachers back?' Anton asked curiously.

'All except for Hagrid,' Dumbledore replied 'though a lovely woman called Wilhelmina Grubbly-Plank who has agreed to temporarily take over the post until Rubeus finishes peace negotiations.'

An hour and a half later Anton had finished his lodgings and had moved on to his office, another bed for Pyra was next to the desk and she dropped into it with bored interest as she watched her master work.

Anton charmed the painted walls into a deep red that went well with the black desk and furniture, then he put the lie detector Moody had given him on the desk next to a few other dark art detectors he'd picked up.

Next to one side of the desk he put a potted plant and on the other side he wordlessly conjured a turret of wind and sealed it in an invisible cage to stop it escaping. For the next ten minutes Anton simply stared at the empty space behind his desk before gritting his teeth and hanging the painting he had gotten for his birthday, he gazed at it for a few moments more before muttering.

'If you could see me now you'd be laughing,' he smiled weakly 'who would've pegged me as a teacher.'

The faces of Gia/Ginny and Rhoan/Ron gazed back silently staring into a place Anton couldn't see.

Shaking his head Anton left the office and turned his intentions on his classroom. He created a duelling platform at the front and a scoreboard behind it, on the white walls he put scattered pictures of duelling battles and of the results of curses, he'd left off the victims being tortured by the Cruciatus as it was eerily reminiscent of the Longbottoms.

'Come on Pyra,' Anton called 'I suppose I'd better get ready for dinner.'

That evening Anton emerged from his quarters wearing black trousers his dragonhide boots a black shirt and a black open robes lined at the bottom in thick red, he'd left his sword off and placed his wand in a holster at his hip with his hair tied back he looked sophisticated but bad.

The other teachers were already seated at the table at the top of the Great Hall and when Anton walked towards them Dumbledore stood up and greeted him.

‘Anton welcome to Hogwarts, may I present you the rest of the staff.’

Dumbledore introduced him to each individual professor and Anton smiled politely at each of them before sitting down in the empty seat between Snape and Flitwick. Pyra scuttled behind Anton’s chair and curled up sleepily.

‘It’s good to have you as the new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher,’ Flitwick chirped ‘you’re a lot better than the Ministry’s choice, unbelievable even suggesting such a thing.’

‘The Ministry obviously believes it’s is within its right,’ Snape cut in ‘Fudge will do everything he can to paint us as frauds and this school as corrupt, what do you think Anton?’

‘Maybe he thinks we’re poisoning there minds,’ Anton said wryly (he had decided to treat Snape as if he had never known him).

‘Their minds are to filled with rubbish for us to poison them,’ Snape replied ‘maybe this year we’ll get someone who’s halfway competent, I can’t even begin to dread trying to force knowledge into their dense heads.’

‘You’re to harsh Severus,’ Flitwick said ‘I think we’ve had some really exceptional students over the last few years, there’s David Jobbins in seventh year, Ginny Weasley in fourth and Hermione Granger in fifth.’

‘Neville Longbottom is very good at Herbology,’ Professor Sprout said cheerfully from next to Flitwick ‘I fear he gets a rawer deal than many other students.’

‘Neville Longbottom is one of the most incompetent potion makers I have ever come across,’ Snape said sneering ‘and the hat put him in Gryffindor though, one would ask why.’

‘If it put him in Gryffindor then maybe he’s destined for great things,’ Anton offered keeping a knowing smile off his face.

‘If he’s going to be great I’d hate to see what the competition is,’ Snape returned taking a drink of his mead.

'You never know what the future will bring Severus,' Anton this time did smile 'he may save your life one day.'

Snape smirked in disbelief and opened his mouth to speak but Grubbly Plant spoke over him.

'The rivalry here is a little excessive,' she said to him kindly 'Hufflepuff and Ravenclaw are okay, it's the Slytherins and Gryffindors you've got to watch, never know when they're going to get into conflict.'

'A little rivalry never did anyone any harm,' McGonagall said defensively 'leads to more interesting Quidditch matches.'

'Do you play?' asked Madam Hooch.

'I'm a pretty good seeker,' Anton admitted 'my brother and I considered going professional, but circumstances changed.'

'What position did he play?' McGonagall said interested.

'He was keeper,' Anton replied 'and he was a decent player, we played on under eighteen teams when we were younger.'

'So you'll be watching the matches?' Snape said curiously.

'I hope so,' Anton answered seriously 'I always enjoy Quidditch.'

'So who will you be supporting?' he said carefully, as he said this McGonagall, Sprout and Flitwick all leaned in interest each hoping he would choose their house.

'I'll be remaining neutral,' Anton laughed 'or unless one house wins me over.'

As everyone was leaving the hall an hour later Madam Pomfrey cornered him.

'You need to come to the Hospital Wing tomorrow for me to give you a check up and if necessary modify the potions you're taking' she said leaving no room for argument. 'I'll see you at eleven.'

Anton couldn't even attempt to look vaguely pleased at the prospect to he just nodded and walked towards the staircase.

Pyra scampered along next to him sniffing at anything and everything, Anton reached his door and spoke the password.

'Incendio.'

The door clicked open and Anton realised he'd never seen a door like this on the third floor before, though he did remember a hideous tapestry in his first year, a garish picture in his second, he couldn't recall what had been there in his third and fourth but in his fifth he recollected a hanging that Hermione had turned her nose up whenever they went past, of course only now it occurred to him that she had known it was the quarters of the current DADA.

Anton held his wand and flicked his wrist transfiguring the door into a sheet of mirror glass that stretched to the height and width of the door that had flashes of red swirling through it. Anton said the password again and the smooth surface turned to liquid, Anton stepped into the mirror and came out in his quarters. After waiting a few moments Pyra hesitantly followed.

The next morning Anton had breakfast in his living area brought to him by a couple of house elves, he curled up on his settee wrapped in a thick expensive dressing gown which was 100% silk and was deep red and midnight black with swishes of amber threaded through it which had been chosen by Mrs Weasley who had insisted it brought out his eyes.

Pyra was curled up next to him eating slowly the raw red meat Anton was feeding her. Anton was reading a book and glancing at the clock wondering how long he could leave it until he had to go to Madam

Pomfrey, at half ten he reluctantly pushed Pyra gently off the couch and headed into the bathroom.

Ten minutes later he strode through his door in black trousers and a plain black shirt the pendant standing out with it's redness glowing he had a plain black open robe on top.

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'You're late,' the nurse said as Anton walked through the door.

'It's eleven,' Anton protested 'that's the time you told me to be here.'

'It's five past,' she countered 'now sit on the bed.'

Anton reluctantly sat down, Madam Pomfrey ran her wand over him while she read a file.

'The poison has left your body,' she murmured 'though your immune system is still extremely compromised. There are also quite a few missing sections in your patient history, though according to this you've had thirty two broken bones in varying places, been stabbed at least eleven times, been unconscious more times than you can recall and have lost count of the amount of times you've been cursed.'

'That sounds about right,' Anton shrugged 'I've led an adventurous life.'

'There's adventurous and just plain dangerous,' she said still scanning him with her wand.

'So can I come off the potions?' Anton asked hopefully.

'You're on four potions to take twice a day,' she said lowering the file 'is that right?'

'Yeh,' Anton confirmed 'so can I come off them?'

'If you didn't have an allergy to the Root of Nightindrade it would be a considerable plus,' she said candidly 'as it was pumped straight into your veins it nearly killed you, I think the best option would be to put you on an entirely different potion which will rebuild your immune system and make it stronger.'

'So what I just take this potion and I'll be fine?' Anton said.

'Not quite so simple,' she replied 'it's a rare and complex potion but unless you want to be reliant on potions for the rest of your life it's necessary.'

'Is it that bad?' Anton asked amazed 'I thought this was a short term problem.'

'No,' she said simply 'The Idris potion is a supremely difficult potion to brew and is not commonly for sale.'

'So what's the point if I can't get it?' Anton said confused.

'I never said you couldn't get it' she said.

'But...?'

'Severus has consented to make the potion,' she said 'he confessed he was interested in making a rare potion and this is no doubt a suitable challenge.'

'So when should I be cured?'

'If you take the potion five times a day you should be fully healthy by Christmas at

the latest,' the nurse replied.

'But the Healer Rowley said I'd be nearly fine by now' Anton protested.

‘The Healer in St Mungo’s was dealing with short term solutions,’ Madam Pomfrey ‘I am here to ensure you are fully healthy and able to give your students the best teacher.’

The first dose of his potion was delivered that night after dinner and Snape brought it directly to his quarters in a silver goblet.

Anton regarded the contents pensively, it was thick glutinous black that had bubbles popping on the surface.

‘How much do I have to drink?’ he said unenthusiastically.

‘At least half,’ Snape replied, it occurred to Anton he looked positively cheerful at the fact he’d created the concoction.

‘I should say thank you Severus,’ Anton said taking the goblet ‘but I’m really not looking forward to drinking this.’

‘Start drinking,’ Snape said tapping his watch ‘it needs to be drunk when it’s still warm.’

Anton took a gulp and gagged almost immediately, it was like thick oil in taste and texture, Anton retched and paused before forcing more down. He managed to keep it down for a total half a minute before it came spewing back up, Anton ran to the bathroom and threw it all into the toilet. Pushing the handle he pushed himself back up and staggered out of the bathroom feeling ill.

Snape looked at him carefully before saying ‘well as you wasted all of that potion you need to drink the rest which is in the goblet.’

‘But I’ve already drank the foul stuff,’ Anton grumbled picking up the cup again.

‘And I’m sure the toilet appreciates it,’ Snape said ‘but if you don’t drink it you will die within the next year.’

'I think that would be preferable,' Anton muttered forcing it down his throat.

Chapter Thirteen

Anton attended the party at the end of the holidays in No. 12 Grimmauld Place with a quiet enthusiasm. The moment he arrived he spotted the less than eager figure of Harry who was listening subtly to what Lupin and Kingsley were talking about- why Dumbledore hadn't picked him. Anton headed over to Harry as he made his way to the food table.

'He has faith in you,' Anton said quietly making Harry's head jerk back in surprise.

'How do you?' Harry asked the food forgotten.

'Trust me,' Anton smiled 'it may seem like he's ignoring you but he's just worried, I'm assuming he didn't give you the prefect badge because he thought you had enough to deal with.'

'I hadn't even thought about who would get it,' Harry admitted 'I just didn't think...'

'I know how you feel,' Anton said softly 'to experience moments or even whole periods of time where you feel completely alone and times where it feels everyone is keeping secrets.'

'It feels like nobody trusts me,' Harry muttered 'even though I've gone up against Voldemort I can't know what's happening.'

'Harry, everybody's worried they'll put too much pressure on you,' Anton said comfortingly 'everyone especially your godfather just want you to have a normal life. And in any case I wasn't a prefect so it shows you don't have to be one to be great.'

Anton left Harry looking much more cheerful and went in search of Mrs Weasley who was supposed to be battling a boggyart round about then, as he passed Sirius he noticed Mylee close by and grinned despite what he was going to face.

She was clutching a dead Charlie when Anton reached the room sobbing into his chest she croaked.

‘Ridiculas.’

Next came dead Bill and then dead Harry.

Having seen enough Anton hurried forward and pulled the shaky Mrs Weasley away from the boggart, as they stepped back from the boggart Harry himself arrived and he stared at his dead body in horror.

‘What?’ he asked.

Mad-Eye, Lupin and Sirius rushed up behind Harry and Lupin darted forward to take Mrs Weasley from Anton, Sirius was looking at the dead body of Harry with an odd look on his face.

As Mrs Weasley stepped back the boggart changed form again this time taking Anton’s fear on.

It was no longer a dementor that formed as Anton’s nightmare, this time it was swirling vortex of churning water that sped towards Anton at an alarming and deadly rate. Reacting quickly Anton pulled his wand out and cried.

‘Ridiculas!’

The water was changed into an ice cube that clunked limply to the floor.

‘Ha,’ Anton said flatly.

The party ended soon after the boggart was destroyed with hardly anyone still in the mood to celebrate and an early night needed for the start they were getting in the morning. The teachers passed into the fireplace each calling out their respective lodgings, Anton wished goodbye to everyone before he stepped into the fire and was

transported to his rooms and his salamander who had succeeded in creating a small bonfire in the centre of the room.

Most of the teachers had already prepared everything necessary for the return of the pupils yet the morning of their return brought hurried rushing throughout the school. The house-elves dusted and aired beds like they were under a threat of death. Sprout was tending her plants, Snape was sorting his potion stock, McGonagall was checking and re-checking the first year list and as far as Anton could tell Trelawney was occupying herself with a bottle of sherry.

To pass the time Anton went for a run through the Forbidden Forest, he jumped over fallen branches and roots steering well clear of all of the hives, nests and densely populated areas. When he finished his run he jogged to his room puffing as his body sucked in much needed oxygen.

The sky was darkening as Anton stepped out of his bathroom he was already dry, he opened his cupboard and shuffled through his new robes trying to decide what to wear. He needed to make a good first impression on the entire student body, if he looked the part he would be treated with respect. Anton didn't want to come across as their friend, even though he had known a lot of them in that way, instead he was their teacher and such a position was one he was determined to succeed in.

Anton selected an open black robe lined with deep thick red silk, the arms of the robe were loose-fitting getting bigger as they got down the arms, the hood was also lined. Anton put on black tight fitting trousers that tucked into his dragon hide boots, on his top he wore a plain back shirt. When he pulled the robe over the top the red silk lining was visible and the exact shade of blood, after tying his hair loosely back he looped the pendant around his neck and smiled as the red glowed out. Attaching the sword sheath to his back he placed his sword in it and positioned his wand in its holster by his waist.

Leaving his room he tried to get Pyra to stay in the room but she wasn't having any of it and short of tying her up he was having

trouble getting her to stay. When he reached the Grand Staircase he stopped again and said.

‘Pyra you can’t come with me,’ he stroked her gently ‘animals aren’t allowed.’

Pyra whined and nudged Anton’s foot with her head.

‘Oh, I think we can bend the rules a little,’ a laughing voice said from the staircase above.

Looking up Anton saw Dumbledore heading down the stairs towards him in deep blue robes.

‘Won’t the other teachers get jealous?’ Anton smiled.

‘I think they’ll survive,’ Dumbledore replied ‘and it’s obvious she is cleverer than your average magical creature.’

They walked down together towards the Entrance Hall, outside of the windows Anton was able to see the lighted lamps of the school carriages as they trundled closer to the school.

‘Looking forward to your first year of teaching?’ Dumbledore asked interested.

‘If there was one thing I never expected to be doing,’ Anton answered wryly ‘this would have been top of the list.’

‘Didn’t you enjoy school?’ the headmaster said.

‘Some of it was ok,’ Anton said hesitantly ‘but like all things, there are bad points as well.’

‘We try and make all our students at home but there are always those that don’t enjoy it, especially at first,’ he paused and looked at Anton as if having a sudden thought ‘the name Lukyen was a Russian family that supposedly died out about a hundred years ago, are you related to them?’

‘I honestly don’t know,’ Anton said shaking his head slightly ‘ancestors were never spoken of, some family secret and whatever it was my Father took it to his grave.’

‘As is what often happens,’ Dumbledore accepted as they went through the doors to the Great Hall.’

They reached the teachers table and took their respective seats, as Anton sat down he realised there was a goblet of the black potion next to his other goblet. He grimaced and looked at Snape who tapped his wrist once before turning back to his conversation with Sprout.

Anton picked it up and reluctantly began to gulp it down desperately trying to ignore the wretched taste, Pyra curled up beneath his chair and occupied herself with a bowl of vinegar the house-elves had supplied.

As Anton finished the potion and managed to keep it down the hall doors opened and students streamed in calling excitedly to each other and yelling greetings. Anton watched as many of faces as possible, frequently he would spot a familiar face and then he was immediately recall the way in which they died, Dumbledore was sitting on Anton’s other side and he leaned over.

‘You are about to see an extremely fascinating sorting ceremony which is unique to this school.’ he said cheerfully.

‘Should I be worried?’ Anton asked smiling.

‘Only if you dislike talking objects,’ Dumbledore said his twinkling merrily.

When everyone was settled and the talking had died down slightly Professor Grubbly-Plank came through the doors and taking her seat, this signalled that the first years had arrived, and sure enough five minutes later the doors opened again and McGonagall came through leading the terrified first years and holding the stool and Sorting Hat.

When she placed the Hat on the stool it burst into song and like the first time it delivered its message along with its end warning.

...Oh, Know the perils, read the signs,

The warning history shows,

For our Hogwarts is in danger

From external, deadly foes

And we must unite inside her

Or we'll crumble from within

I have told you, I have warned you...

Let the Sorting now begin.

Applause sounded but it was punctured, Dumbledore frowned as he, like others understood the message clearly.

'That makes the tally of forewarning total twelve since the school was sorted by the Hat.' he said quietly.

'What does this mean Albus?' McGonagall said softly careful to keep her features composed.

'It means we must be very careful' Dumbledore replied as McGonagall pulled her scroll of paper out.

'Abercrombie, Euan'

The boy was sorted into Gryffindor, next was 'Brickly, Emma' who followed Euan to Gryffindor.

'Burford, Michael,' went into Slytherin.

When at last 'Zeller, Rose' was called and sent to Hufflepuff, McGonagall picked up the stool and Hat and Dumbledore rose to his

feet, after telling everyone to tuck in the food appeared and both the students and the teachers dug in appreciatively.

Anton found himself getting into an interesting conversation with Snape and Dumbledore on the advantages of such a prison as Azkaban and having the Dementor's guard it.

'It was a good idea,' Snape said agreeing 'but with his return the Dementor's will return to his side and leave the prisoners unguarded.'

'Well Fudge will insist,' Dumbledore nodded 'in ignoring all current problems beyond that of deciding I am a risk.'

'I wonder what Fudge will say when the Dark Lord reveals himself,' Anton said sardonically 'no doubt he'll make himself out to be a hero.'

'Most likely he will try,' Dumbledore granted 'but I'm afraid we must suspend this conversation in order to dismiss the students.'

He stood up and talking immediately ceased.

'Welcome back everyone, now you have all finished eating this sumptuous feast I beg to take a few moments of your time for the usual start-of-term notices,' said Dumbledore 'First-years ought to know the Forbidden Forest is out-of-bounds and a few of our older students would do well to remember that.'

Anton saw Harry, Ron and Hermione exchange smirks.

'Mr Filch the caretaker has asked me to remind you for what he tells me is the four-hundredth-and-sixty-second time that magic in the corridors is prohibited as well as a number of other things, a list of which can be found on the door to his office.'

We have two changes in staffing this year, Professor Grubbly-plank is taking over Care of Magical Creatures and we are very pleased to welcome her back, we are also delighted to introduce Professor Lukyen, our new Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher who has taken a break from fighting dark wizards to teach.'

Loud applause came from the students or were unsure whether Anton would be a good teacher or not, nearly all were in the agreement he looked like he'd seen a few battles regardless of his age. Anton didn't miss the affronted looks coming from the trio who were obviously disgruntled that he hadn't told them he was taking over as teacher at Hogwarts.

Without Umbridge's long and boring speech Dumbledore wrapped the Feast up quickly and dismissed the students to their houses, bidding the other departing teachers goodnight Anton got up from his own seat and left the table with Pyra running at his side, students jumped out of his way as he swept down the centre of the Hall.

'Hey Professor!' came a shout.

Turning Anton saw the three hurrying over to him with the twins close behind

'Why didn't you tell us you were going to be the new Professor?' Ron said happily 'Defence is going to be so good this year!'

'I didn't want to spoil the surprise,' Anton responded smirking 'I hope you've been revising this summer, I'm not going to go easy just because I know you.'

'As long as you don't turn out to be a Death Eater in disguise I don't mind,' Harry smiled.

'Ron the First-Years,' Hermione said suddenly grabbing Ron's arm and pulling him away 'we need to show them the way.'

'Have fun Ronnikins,' Fred called at his departing back.

'See you in class then Professor Lukyen,' George said grinning.

The three of them left and Anton continued on his way to his quarters trying to avoid the thronging masses of pupils that were rushing through the halls.

The next morning brought a frenzy of excitement to the younger pupils and resignation to the older students at the prospect of exams.

Anton studied his own class schedule over a piece of toast, first lesson he had first-year Gryffindor and Ravenclaw, this meant there would probably be no great problems and a pretty straight forward lesson.

'What are you doing for your first lesson?' Professor Sinistra asked curiously.

'The differences between curses, hexes and charms,' Anton smiled 'what are you doing with yours?'

'Seventh years,' she responded 'I'll be doing planets in the next solar system, that's assuming they can even remember the names of the ones in this solar system.'

Anton laughed and went back to his breakfast, he watched as McGonagall handed timetables out to the Gryffindors, he watched closely as the trio read their timetables, the looks of gloom at first and then obvious smiles as they noticed they had Anton double last thing.

He left it a couple of minutes once the bell gone to make his way to his first lesson, the first years were waiting in complete silence in a line outside his classroom, a couple were missing and Anton assumed they were lost somewhere. Give it a few weeks and they'd be laughing and causing mini riots between themselves, but for now they looked terrified.

Anton purposefully didn't smile as he swept towards them his deep red robes billowing in a very Snape-like way, clicking his fingers he made the door burst open with a flash of red light that caused the ones closest to it to scream in surprise.

'Go in and stand at the back!' he ordered.

They rushed quickly in and hurried to the back of the classroom, Anton continued to the front of the classroom and leaned against the blackboard, summoning the register to his right hand he studied it.

‘Front row, far left, Abercrombie,’ he commanded and watched as the boy rushed to his seat his Gryffindor colours standing out ‘Next to Abercrombie I’ll have Brickly.’

The girl stumbled to her seat a nervous wreck.

‘Next table along Carter,’ he continued ‘next to him, Lucia Diggory.’

The Ravenclaw went to her seat and Anton realised she was Cedric’s cousin, a pang of regret followed but he masked it over as he assigned seats quickly.

When he was done he threw the parchment onto his desk and looked at the class.

‘I am Professor Lukyen,’ he said calmly ‘I will endeavour to be a fair teacher and place all my energies in making sure you learn’ he paused for effect ‘I will treat you like adults- with respect. However if this respect is not reciprocated I will waste no time in punishing that individual.’

He gazed at the scared faces letting his last statement hang.

‘Now then, who can give me the definition of a hex?’

Hands shot into the air and Anton allowed a small smile as he pointed to a Ravenclaw on the third row.

‘Is a hex a spell that is done to disable an opponent?’ he said quietly.

‘Are you asking me or telling me Nick?’ Anton said raising an eyebrow.

‘Urm telling,’ he said even quieter.

'That is part of the purpose of a hex,' Anton nodded 'five points to Ravenclaw.'

Nick smiled broadly at the points.

'Now,' Anton said looking at them closely 'who can tell me what a curse is?'

Fifty minutes later when the bell sounded Anton dismissed his class and watched them go, they were all smiling and talking excitedly about their first lesson, Anton watched them go with a look of contented pride before fixing a frown back on his face as the seventh years entered the classroom.

This time he let them sit where they wanted, they were a mix of all four houses and all looked ready to learn.

'I am Professor Lukyen,' he greeted them 'I have been fighting against the Dark Arts full time since I was seventeen, I have lost friends and comrades and if any of you are interested in a career in Defence you need the best teaching I can provide. You also need to know spells that are more advanced than stupefy.'

The sullen looks unknowingly changed to looks of interest as they thought of the spells Anton would be teaching them.

'Now who knows the bone breaking curse and what its proper name is?' Anton paused as hands were raised 'better yet, who can actually do it?'

Anton found he quite enjoyed teaching and his lesson with the seventh years passed really quickly, with the homework of practising the curse on spiders, however he did warn that if they used the curse on another student he would do everything within his power to get them expelled.

As they were leaving the classroom with their wands still smoking Dumbledore appeared at the door beaming as he noticed the smiling faces of the older students.

'Headmaster,' Anton smiled 'what can I do for you.'

'I was just checking your morning went ok,' Dumbledore replied.

'I actually enjoyed teaching,' Anton said incredulously.

'By the looks of the pupils I suspect they enjoyed you teaching them,' Dumbledore twinkled.

Break was followed by the Hufflepuff and Slytherin first years, Anton repeated his first lesson again with slightly less results, the Hufflepuffs were introverted and the Slytherins seemed to enjoy nothing more than taunting them, as they didn't know any magic, yet one thuggish and decidedly stupid Slytherin reverted to throwing his new wand at a small Hufflepuff which banged off his head in an explosion of sparks, thus landing in Anton's first detention.

The fourth years were Ravenclaw and Slytherin and their tactics seemed to be intelligence verses slyness.

'Today we'll be doing the unforgivables,' Anton said and immediately mouths dropped open 'What are the three curses?'

'The Imperio,' a girl offered.

'Correct take five points for Slytherin,' Anton nodded 'the Imperio Curse will render the person under the complete control of the caster, name another one' he pointed to a boy.

'Crucio,' he said without pausing.

'The Cruciatus Curse is one of the most painful curses to be inflicted' Anton said gravely 'the very pain is like being stabbed with white hot knives, and with extended use can have terrible effects.'

‘How do you know what its like?’ a Ravenclaw asked timidly.

‘Experience,’ Anton replied ‘now what is the last unforgivable?’

‘The killing curse,’ a Slytherin answered.

‘Avada Kedavra,’ Anton said his face a mask of seriousness ‘it will kill instantly and is unblockable by wizarding experience, however a few over the years have survived such as our own Mr Potter who ensured we would live in relative peace for fourteen years. Any use of these curses on another human will earn the wizard a one way trip to the hell called Azkaban.’

Anton completed his lesson with an example similar to the one Mad-Eye- or Bartemis Crouch had done in his own fourth year with spiders.

After lunch it was double with the fifth years, they entered the classroom slowly as if expecting the worse or possibly having heard from the other students what the lessons were like.

‘Sit where you want,’ Anton directed not smiling as he watched them sink into chairs and pull out their books and wands, he watched as Hermione, Ron and Harry chose seats near the front with Neville, it wasn’t his imagination that Harry was looking very annoyed, no doubt already having been whispered about and pointed at.

‘I’m Professor Lukyen,’ he said ‘I will treat you like adults if you have the maturity to act like them, I demand respect and will give you such in return, this year is your OWL’s and I am here to make sure you pass them. I have trained in Defence for more years than I can be bothered to remember so I am more than qualified to train you, any questions?’

Malfoy raised his hand ‘are you a muggle born Sir?’ he said with an air of politeness

‘That question Draco, is neither relevant or appropriate,’ Anton said remembering his dislike for the boy but not showing it and also

realising that his answer would affect the way in which Draco and the other Slytherins treated him as a teacher.

‘But are you?’ Draco asked ‘I’m only curious.’

‘No Draco both of my parents were magical,’ Anton said resignedly ‘but some of the better witches and wizards have been muggle born. Now any relevant questions?’

‘Is it true You-Know-Who’s back?’ Parvati said nervously.

Everyone looked with interest at Anton as this question was asked.

‘Two months ago came with a sudden influx of dark wizard activity,’ Anton replied calmly ‘I doubt they all surfaced due to any other reason.’

People shuffled nervously in their seats and Anton noticed Seamus looking uncomfortable.

‘And if Voldemort...’ students gasped in horror but Anton ignored them ‘if Voldemort is back you need all the teaching I can give. Wands out.’

‘Who here believes they are competent in basic spells?’

Hands rose into the air, among them were Hermione’s, Malfoy’s, Harry’s, Ron’s and a few others.

‘Excellent.’ Anton allowed for a smile ‘Lavender, since you think you are capable on the platform please with...Dean.’

The two of them nervously walked to the front and stepped onto the platform at opposite sides.

‘First one to body bind the other wins,’ Anton said pleasantly ‘on the count of one...two...Three!’

They waved their wands and shouted ‘Petrificus Totalus!’ Lavender shot a beam into the ceiling and Dean managed to get his in the right

direction but it was so feeble it simply knocked Lavender back a couple of steps.

‘Oh dear,’ Anton said shaking his head ‘I believe I have my work cut out.’

A knock at the door came and Anton irritably shouted ‘come in or go away!’

The door didn’t open so Anton called again, when the door didn’t open Anton flicked his wand and it burst open with a bang a yell of surprise came from the other side and his class began to laugh,

‘Shut it!’ Anton ordered striding to the door as a second year Ravenclaw stepped through, she was looking a bit stunned and was holding a goblet, the contents of which she had tipped over herself in a black mess. At the sight of the laughing class of fifth years her lip trembled and her eyes got watery.

‘Professor Snape sent me,’ she whispered ‘with this.’

‘Yes but you seem to be wearing it,’ Anton said wincing slightly as he thought of what Snape would say at the waste of the rare potion ‘scourgify’ he vanished the potion from her robes.

‘Am I in trouble sir?’ she asked timidly ‘Professor Snape will give me detention.’

Anton sighed and walked back to his desk grabbing a slip of parchment and a quill he scrawled a message.

Severus, slight accident with the potion that wasn’t this girl’s fault. I’ll send someone at the end of this period to get some more

My deepest apologies, Anton

He folded the parchment and handed it to the girl.

‘Give this to Professor Snape,’ he instructed ‘preferably before you tell him you tipped it over yourself.’

The girl next to ran from the classroom and Anton turned back to his class

‘I’m going to give you a mouse,’ he said ‘I will give you ten minutes to bind it, if you kill it in an attempt to make it look bound you will loose house points.’

He pulled a box of wriggling mice out of his drawer and casually tossed a mouse to each person smiling as some dropped them on capture when they wriggled.

‘Off you go!’

The room was filled with the shouts of people making the spell, Anton strolled down the aisles and watched as they attempted it. Some like Hermione got it first time others got its few times later. A number caused unexpected effects such as swelling or colour change and some didn’t get it done at all, this being Neville, Crabbe and Goyle and a couple others.

Anton called time and walked to the front of the classroom, while his back was turned he heard a spell being called and a thud as something heavy hit the floor. Spinning round he whipped his own wand out and saw Neville lying prone on the floor in a full body bind.

Anton didn’t say anything he just adjusted his eyes and looked for the most recent spell fired, with his eyes like this though people were just shadows, spotting a silvery glow that came from Neville’s still form. Tracing it back the glow led to Draco Malfoy, blinking the room came back into focus he saw Draco was looking confident.

‘Relashio,’ he said unbinding Neville ‘Mr Malfoy detention tomorrow night, if I had wanted you to attack fellow students that is what I would have said.’

‘But!’ protested Draco ‘I didn’t do anything.’

‘I would disagree,’ Anton said sending Draco a look that had the blood draining from his face ‘twenty points from Slytherin.’

‘Neville are you ok?’

‘I’m fine Professor,’ Neville stuttered pulling himself back onto his seat.

‘Now since less than a third if you successfully mastered the spell I want you to undo whatever spell you’ve cast, if you can’t, ask me and then we’ll go over the spell properly.’

Wands were waved and the door was opened again, this time Snape billowed in holding a goblet and not looking particularly happy.

‘This has to be drunk at set times Anton,’ he said passing him the goblet ‘and drink it while it’s still warm.’

‘Thank you Severus,’ Anton said surprised ‘but I would have come and got it at the end of fifth.’

‘Set times,’ Snape said walking to the door ‘and I thought if I sent another useless second year you might find another way to cover them in potion.’

Snape swept back out and everyone pretended they hadn’t been listening. When the double lesson had finished and Anton had gone over shielding as well as binding and had set a foot long essay on the two spells, he spotted Neville leaving.

‘Neville!’ he called ‘can I have a word please.’

Neville looked back unenthusiastically and walked over to Anton

‘Sir I didn’t mean to cause a disturbance.’ he said quietly.

‘That’s not it Neville,’ Anton said kindly ‘I wanted to ask you how you think you’re getting on in classes?’

‘I’m not really a good wizard,’ Neville confessed miserably ‘in fact I’m rubbish and I make a mess of every spell and potion I do.’

'Need any help with catching up?' Anton offered remembering how Neville had progressed in the DA.

'Why would you ask me?' Neville said in surprise forgetting his nervousness 'other people are loads better!'

'I'm not interested in helping people who don't need it,' Anton replied smiling 'I'm interested in helping people who have the potential to be amazing wizards.'

'Then you're definitely wasting your time,' Neville protested 'I'm really bad.'

'No you're not,' Anton said cheerfully 'I'll see you next Tuesday evening, have a good night.'

Chapter Fourteen

That evening Anton was marking class work in his office when a knock came at the door.

'Come in,' he said loudly.

The door was pushed open and the first year Slytherin he had placed in detention plodded in.

'It's eight Sir,' he grunted staring at the office with its deep red walls and odd objects.

'That is true,' Anton nodded 'bring that chair and put it next to the desk and I'll tell you what I want you to do.'

The brown haired thick set boy dragged the chair to the edge of the desk and stood behind it nervously.

'Sit down,' Anton said looking up from his marking 'I'm going to you an easy detention seeing as this is your first, but rest assured if you Ever! Repeat your blatant disregard for my rules you will find yourself helping Filch clean the trophy room.

Now I want five hundred lines on why wand misuse is against school policy, off you go.'

The first year began writing and Anton continued with his marking, ten minutes later the first year began to sweat and pull at his collar as his colour rose

'Professor it's really hot in here,' he almost gasped 'can't you do a temperature spell can you?'

'I hadn't actually noticed,' Anton said truthfully and omitted to tell the first year he was causing the high temperatures without realising, waving his wand he circulated cool air through the room 'nearly finished?'

‘Another two hundred to go,’ the boy mumbled with his tongue between his teeth

‘Excellent you should be out of here soon,’ Anton replied scrawling corrections over a sheet of parchment.

Another twenty minutes later Anton dismissed the Slytherin and finished up on his marking and at half past eight he locked his office and made his way into his quarters where he made sure Pyra was asleep and changed into black robes and a thick hooded cloak and then threw floo powder in his fireplace disappearing to Knockturn Alley.

Anton stepped into the dingy alley pulling his thick hood up to conceal his identity, he walked towards a dingy tavern and stepped inside the filthy place. It was a small place filled with witches and wizards with their hoods up and sipping cheap drinks, Anton strode up to the small bar, behind which a short man with grimy robes that once may have been green was serving the patrons. Anton sat down on an empty barstool and beckoned the ruddy faced man over with one finger.

‘What do you want,’ he said with a voice of uttermost annoyance.

‘A Bloody Mary to start,’ Anton said tersely ‘and a knowing ear would be good.’

The barman slammed the drink down in a dirty cracked glass and stared at Anton concealed face with suspicion.

‘What kind of information are you after?’ he said after a while ‘because I ain’t no snitch.’

‘I’m not asking you to be,’ Anton replied ‘I just need you to point a finger if you think it’s worth your while.’

As he said this, Anton pulled three galleons out of his cloak pocket and placed them on the bar, the man grabbed them immediately and shoved them into his own pocket.

'I'm listening,' he said realising this was an opportunity to line his pocket.

'I'm what you could call disillusioned with the way wizarding society is run and how many muggle borns are allowed into our world,' Anton let it hang before saying 'I'm interested in helping sort it out.'

'And what, you want me to...?' the barman asked inviting Anton to continue.

'I want you to point me towards a certain witch who can put me in contact with some people who serve someone who's recently returned,' Anton knew that if the barman didn't know anything he wouldn't know what Anton was talking about.

'I don't know anything!' the man said a little too quickly sounding flustered 'and I'm going to ask you to get the hell out of my pub!'

A hooded figure to the left of Anton stood up from their seat and hurried from the tavern as fast as they could, Anton surveyed the barman as he watched the figure go with a look of anguish, wasting no more time Anton stood up and followed the figure.

The hooded person was scuttling down the alley when Anton made it to the door, whipping out his wand he pointed it and shouted.

'Crucio!'

The hooded figure was blown off their feet and smashed into the ground screaming with pain as the curse racked through their body, Anton strode slowly up to them his wand outstretched and he watched unblinking as the person thrashed around on the floor desperately trying to get away from the pain.

Anton cancelled the curse and bent over the twitching figure, he reached and yanked their hood off, in front of him lay the witch who

had set the trap and sent him to the Death Eaters at the very beginning.

'Well isn't this a surprise,' he said silkily 'it's the evil witch who gave me a one way ticket to a meeting with a few Death Eaters.'

'Who are you?' she shivered.

'Do you send that many people you can't remember one from another?' Anton asked his voice cold 'but do you ever spend one thought on what happens to those who refuse?'

'I do a job!' she spat 'I serve the Dark Lord and I'm proud of it, I don't care how many people get killed because they can't see the bigger picture.'

Anton lent towards the witch and yanked her sleeve up, on her arm was the Dark Mark that was burned black.

'Well well it seems I've come upon a Death Eater,' Anton said sweetly 'a Death Eater with no protection from her comrades, mind you, I doubt they'd run to your aid, as they say, there's no honour among thieves.'

'We will hunt your down and kill you,' she seethed regaining her strength 'no one will dare to stand in our way!'

'Crucio!' Anton cursed again, watching with interest as the witch was reduced back to a quivering lump.

'You are never going to send another wizard or witch to their fate' Anton promised as he stopped the curse.

'The only way you're going to succeed is if you kill me!' she yelled 'and I don't think you've got it in you!'

Anton crouched down and lifted his wand, looking round he realised not one resident had come to investigate the sounds 'you're wrong,' he whispered in her ear 'I've definitely got it in me.'

Her eyes widened in surprise and realisation as Anton lifted his wand and barked 'Avada Kedavra!'

The green curse hit the witch and killed her instantly her face still looking shocked.

'Game over,' Anton said coldly holstering his wand 'you shouldn't have doubted me.'

Leaving her body on the litter strewn floor Anton stood up and headed away from Knockturn Alley back towards the fresher air of Diagon Alley. Sweeping down the cleaner street Anton hurried into the Leaky Cauldron and flooed through the fire arriving in his office with Pyra awake and looking worried as he climbed out of the grate she ran towards him and jumped into his arms licking him with her fiery breath.

'What's the matter girl?' Anton asked hugging her 'were you worried about me?'

Pyra gave him another lick in answer, knocking back his hood Anton ran a hand through his hair and frowned as he thought of the trials to come in his fight against Voldemort.

The next day went as well as the first day, the only difference was that his lessons must have been talked about with interest because his classes were all buzzing with excitement as they lined up outside.

The last lesson he had to teach was third year Hufflepuff and Slytherins and Anton felt himself cursing which ever idiot had paired the two houses, the Slytherins in this year were vicious and lots of them came from Death Eater families, the Hufflepuff's were more docile than he'd seen in any other year and didn't seem to know how to combat the Slytherins.

After a vain attempt at teaching them what boggarts were (nobody seemed to grasp what they were and kept asking him why wizards didn't know what boggarts truly looked like) he had also taken a total

of thirty points from both houses and barely resisted cursing one girl who would go on to kill Molly Weasley while not even batting an eyelid.

When he eventually dismissed his class and sorted his classroom out it was already well into dinner and the main course was nearly finished, he hurried to the teachers table and took his seat, grabbing a bread roll he took a bite from it before filling his plate with sausages and bacon – meat filled him faster and gave him more energy.

A black raven soared into the hall and circled in the candlelit sky before dropping a letter in front of Anton, he recognised with interest that it was a blue howler, clicking his fingers the letter sprung open and instead of screaming it hissed its message venomously, nevertheless it was still loud enough for a lot of people to hear.

‘Anton...Looks like I’ve found you, you may be taking a little break in the safety of a school. But trust me Voldemort is still after you and I will take pleasure in being the one to kill you, I don’t care how many times you’ve escaped death. It always catches up...’

Anton stared thoughtfully at the howler as it turned itself into a shower of water droplets raining down on the floor in front of the table, Ofelia was definitely getting impatient and it showed.

Nearly every student was staring at Anton, all interested in why their new teacher was getting death threats from a mystery source. The teachers were looking anxious at what it could mean and Dumbledore was keeping his face placid but Anton could see his mind ticking away.

Turning to Professor McGonagall he asked calmly ‘Minerva, you wouldn’t mind passing the gravy would you?’

Anton excused himself early from dinner and hurried to his office where he pulled a flat silvery bowl from his desk that was roughly thirty centimetres in diameter. Setting it on his desk, Anton conjured a

ball of fire and dropped it into the bowl where it swirled in a glowing stream of light, next he broke a twig off the plant and dropped it in, it swirled along with the fire. Clicking his fingers Anton then lowered the shield on the tornado and waving his hand he forced some of the air into the bowl to dance with the other two elements.

Taking a glass vial Anton walked to the nearest bathroom and filled it with water, when he added the water to the bowl it churned along with the others. Summoning a small dagger Anton sliced it across the palm of his hand drawing deep red blood, holding his hand over the bowl he dripped his blood into the bowl the four elements turned into glowing white liquid and Anton frowned as he thought of what he was going to do.

Taking a deep breath he lowered his mind shields completely and pushed his conscious into the bowl.

‘Ofelia,’ he whispered ‘where are you?’

After what seemed like ages an answer came from a long distance away.

‘In my mind Anton,’ the voice of Ofelia laughed ‘I didn’t expect you to take the risk, turns out you can still surprise me.’

‘Your little stunts are getting old Felly,’ Anton said irritably ‘you can’t get to me in here and I’m not afraid of coming to you if it means I’ll stop you.’

‘But that’s your one mistake,’ Ofelia breathed ‘by checking I was far away you had to invoke Elemental magic, and that’s means you lowered your shields...and that means I’m in your mind just as much as you’re in mine. You’ve let me in...’

Anton realised his error and pulled back from the power but Ofelia understood what he was doing and pushed all of her energy down the mind line and towards Anton. The raw power smashed into Anton and pushed his conscious back into own body along with the angry mind of Ofelia.

Anton's eyes flew open and his vision was tinted with blue and he could still hear Ofelia laughing in his mind, thrusting out his hand he reached blindly for the bowl, he managed to feel the rim and striking it hard he knocked it from the table, it hit the floor with a crack as it broke, immediately the blue vision snapped away and the laughing was cut off, a shockwave cut through the air like a bullet and blew books and objects from the shelves.

Anton stood absolutely still for a few moments gasping slightly in shock at what had happened, the bowl was lying in three pieces on the floor and not a trace of any of the materials he had used or the white liquid remained.

Eventually he straightened up and shook his head to clear the dull aching that had come on after the use of Elemental magic, bending down he picked the broken pieces up and waving his wand he mended the basin and returned it to the drawer.

Flopping down into his chair Anton closed his eyes tiredly, scampering feet signalled that Pyra was coming over to him, when he opened his eyes she lifted her front feet up and placed them on Anton's lap and then lowered her head as well. Anton smiled tiredly and stroked her hot head.

'I'm an idiot,' he said quietly 'I took a risk and I messed up.'

She looked at him quizzically before closing her own eyes.

Half an hour later a sharp knock came at his office door, Anton who was in the middle of choking down his well regulated potion gulped the rest down grimacing.

'Come in!' he coughed wiping his mouth.

The door swung open and an irritated Draco Malfoy stomped in looking utterly put out at the prospect of having to serve detention.

'I'm here for detention,' he said coldly.

'Well I would say that detail is obvious,' Anton said impatiently his tolerance at an all time low.

'So what do you want me to do?' Draco asked his tone edging into insolence.

'What do I want you to do...?' Anton pondered the question 'I know exactly what I want you to do!'

He stood up quickly and grabbed his thick cloak off his desk and swung it over his deep red open robes beneath which his black trousers and dragon hide boots went well with his black shirt.

'We're going to go on a walk,' he said striding to the door his 6'3 frame towering over Draco.

'Where to?' Draco said nervously.

'The Forest,' Anton said relieved to be leaving the stuffiness of his office.

'THE FOREST!' Draco next to yelled 'are you mad?'

'If you continue speaking to me like that then I will be,' Anton warned sweeping through his classroom with Pyra at his heels 'now get a move on before I give you another detention.'

By the time they reached the edge of the forest Draco had abandoned any sense of dignity he had managed to hold on to and was trembling with his wand grasped firmly in his hand. Anton wasn't sure why he had brought the teen to the forest, he didn't have any great resentment to the boy- just the adult he would become if things didn't change.

'Are you sure this is wise Professor?' Draco asked hesitantly as he stared into the thick foliage.

‘There is nothing to worry about Malfoy,’ Anton replied taking a step into the darkness with his wand lit with Lumos.

‘What about the dark creatures?’ Malfoy pushed not wanting to follow his teacher.

‘They won’t bother us,’ Anton said almost cheerfully ‘I know my way around the forest better than most.’

He strode into the forest with Pyra chasing after him, it took Draco until Anton had got to five meters in before he hurried after him.

‘My Father will hear about this,’ Draco muttered angrily under his breath ‘this is not what a detention should be like.’

‘Not what you expected when you attacked Neville?’ Anton asked icily ‘you should learn Draco, that not everything is going to be how you like it and those in the service of others often learn that lesson the hard way.’

‘What’s that supposed to mean?’ Draco asked his insolence forgotten as he eyed his teacher warily.

‘Nothing Draco,’ Anton answered walking faster into the darkness ‘at least nothing you need to worry about yet.’

They walked for at least ten minutes until quite suddenly Anton sat down on a fallen tree, Pyra lay down and curled up at his feet utterly at home in the forest.

‘Sit down Draco we’re going to be here for a while,’ Anton said coolly.

The Slytherin cautiously sat down opposite Anton his wand grasped firmly in his shaking hand.

Anton smirked to himself and taking a deep breath he relaxed his body and stared into the starry sky – Draco on the other hand was getting more and more nervous with each passing second, he kept jerking his head round to see if he could spot anything within the dark foliage.

Anton felt immorally gleeful at the punishment he was putting the boy through, the part of the Forest they were in was relatively harmless, it was in just the right place to be missed out by most of the animals of the forest as they moved around. Draco was unaware of this and especially as the last time he had entered the forest he had been scared witless and he wasn't faring much better this time.

A high crooning echoed through the nearby trees and Draco jumped to his feet his breathing rapid and sporadic.

'Calm down Draco,' Anton said quietly 'nothing's going to attack us here.'

'But didn't you just hear...?' Draco said fearfully.

Anton shook his head and went back to gazing at the stars.

The crooning sounded again and Malfoy whipped his whole body round.

'Sir!' he next to shouted 'I am not staying in here with these things! We'll get killed!'

'I doubt it,' Anton yawned stroking Pyra's head.

Draco managed to lower himself back to the ground, his arms were wrapped around his knees and trembling. Anton nodded to himself, he had succeeded in his aim, he had successfully got rid of Draco's offensive attitude and was positive that next time he had the fifth years Draco would be the most polite.

Anton opened his mouth to speak to the teenager but was cut off as the crooning came a third time. Not even waiting for Anton to speak Draco jumped up and ran from Anton obviously terrified.

'I'm not staying here!' he yelled.

Anton leaped to his own feet – Draco was running in the wrong direction! And towards danger.

'Draco get back!' he called angrily.

The boy kept running, Anton heaved a sigh and ran after him with Pyra chasing close by.

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Draco ran in a haphazard manner his feet catching on branches and tripping on the uneven surface. He could hear Professor Anton chasing after him no doubt to make him go back to the spot they had been in, he redoubled his efforts to get away.

The ground was getting steeper and the Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher was getting closer, with one last ditch attempt he hurled himself forwards...and into nothingness.

He was falling into a small ravine, at the bottom he could see the shadow of a huge creature with bulbous purple eyes, something moved and the creature's glinting razor white teeth gleamed into view as he saw food hurtling towards him.

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Anton had seen Draco reach the edge of the gully, he almost seemed to jump forwards... Anton threw himself towards the fifth year reaching the edge just as Draco toppled over it.

Taking a mad risk he threw half of his body over the side and grabbed, through some unknown feat his hand came in contact with Draco's leg, he gripped it hard and stopped the boys death plunge.

Draco's terrified face looked up at him and then back at the Lynchen that was waiting expectantly below. Gathering his strength Anton yanked Draco back up to the top and back to safety where Pyra as giving- if possible, a look of utter disapproval.

The boy lay on the ground shaking madly and shivering.

‘Please don’t make me stay here’ he almost begged any arrogance long gone.

Anton guiltily helped the boy to his feet and handed him his wand back that he had dropped on the floor.

‘Lesson one,’ Anton said grimly ‘never run headlong into unknown places without a backup plan. I think that concludes tonight’s detention.’

Anton took a shortcut back to the edge of the forest, grateful that no other animal decided to approach them.

When they got back to the castle he handed Draco a vial of pepper-up-potion before dismissing him, the teenager went shakily his egotism coming back as he got further and further from the teacher.

‘Oh come on!’ Anton protested to the salamander who was still looking at him critically ‘he had it coming.’

Chapter Fifteen

The next lesson that Anton had with the fifth years was the day three days after he had gone into the forest with Draco, the classroom filled up quickly and most seemed extremely excited about another lesson. Anton saw Draco slide into a seat near the back with his customary scowl fixed firmly on his face though Anton couldn't help but notice that he was eyeing him with extreme wariness.

Harry, Hermione and Ron were muttering quietly and Anton thought it best to start the lesson quickly.

'Quiet!' he ordered 'get out your books and turn to page thirty, I know you spent a lesson on this in your third year but that isn't enough, so today we're doing werewolves.'

Books were hurriedly opened and silence fell over the waiting students.

Anton clicked his fingers and began speaking.

'Werewolves are supposedly dark and dangerous creatures in the eyes of the law and society' he said calmly and behind him the relevant words appeared on the blackboard 'can anyone tell me why this is an unfair and inaccurate judgement to make?'

Hands raised and Anton picked one 'Harry what's the answer?'

'It's wrong to say that all werewolves are dark and dangerous because the wizards and witches can't help the fact they've been bitten' Harry replied 'it's only on full moons they can be a risk, quite often they don't want to hurt anyone.'

'Quite right, five points,' Anton nodded 'there are methods by which a werewolf can reduce the risk to others and themselves, which is...Seamus?'

'Me old man said one way was a potion,' Seamus shrugged 'helps them keep their minds.'

‘Five points,’ Anton granted ‘now who knows the name?’

‘Wolfsbane,’ Hermione answered earning another five points for Gryffindor.

‘You’ll learn more about that in potions,’ Anton continued ‘what are the signs of a werewolf?’

The lesson continued with both houses volunteering answers and earning points, Draco did not offer any answers throughout the entire session, he chose instead to glare at Anton with all the venom befitting the son of a Death Eater. After half an hour verbally talking about werewolves Anton hoped that he had been able to rid some of the prejudices from certain werewolves and set the class to copy out the information from the board that had been accumulating since the beginning of the period.

After they were dismissed with the task of a foot long essay on the inequalities suffered of those infected with the werewolf curse and those wizards and witches who were not.

That evening after dinner Anton went to the library, there were a lot of students among the bookshelves and sitting at tables as they worked through their homework undoubtedly with the view to get it finished before the weekend started properly.

Anton went to the librarians desk and to his utter surprise she smiled at him, being so used to her frown he almost forgot what he was after,

‘How can I help you Professor Lukyen?’ she said friendly.

‘Urm...I...’ Anton shook his head and articulated his words carefully ‘I was wondering if you could help me find a book on properties that belonged to old wizarding families in the last hundred years.’

She raised her eyebrows at the unusual request before stepping out from behind her desk and heading over to a bookcase. After about five minutes she pointed a selection of old books.

‘These are all the books we have that satisfy what you are after,’ Madam Pince said knowledgably ‘if there is anything else you need don’t hesitate to ask.’

Anton pulled a book of the indicated shelf and leafed through it looking for the location of a certain house, after a short while he placed it back on the shelf and pulled another one out this again was a futile quest and he jammed the book back with the others while at the same time hauling the next book out. This book was much older than the other two and Anton felt a glimmer of hope that this might supply him with the answer.

Sadly not, it focused on light families rather than dark families. The same disappointments continued with the other five books, ‘surely’ Anton rationalised in his head there had to be something more substantial than the small mention that the fact the Guant family had had to sell their manor house and move to somewhere else- although where was not specified.

This was not good, Anton was starting up his search for the Horcruxes again, in the future the light side had started to slowly by the time they began looking they reached each consecutive hiding place to find the Horcrux had already been taken by Voldemort, Anton gritted his teeth with frustration that he had not been included when Dumbledore had gone after the ring and even more irritation that he had never asked his old headmaster, it would have made his task so much easier.

He toyed briefly with the idea of asking Dumbledore where the Guant’s house was but immediately dismissed it, he thought he may tell the man later on but then again he might not, it would depend on what would happen he could only hope that Ofelia was slower on the uptake.

Putting every book away he strode from the library along the darkening corridors feeling utterly aggravated at the fact his search

had shown up nothing. He had gotten as far as his quarters when he had a brainwave- the archives.

He spun on his heels and swept back through the school, when he reached the room of the archives Anton placed the palm of his hand on the centre of the door (students weren't allowed in) a small white spark flickered and the door unlocked. Pushing it open Anton entered the huge cavernous room, every spare inch was covered in files all sorted chronologically.

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Three hours later Anton was surrounded by bits of paper and was barely resisting the urge to scream, he pulled another file out and struck gold.

Morfinda Gaunt

Born – 1854

...

It went on to list her address 'The House of Gaunt', and it was most probably be where here ancestors had lived as well and was close to Little Hangleton.

Anton whooped quietly and after he called on the house-elves to tidy up (feeling guilty as he still had residual SPEW values in his head) he hurried from the archives, he jogged past Filch and Mrs Norris and headed to Dumbledore's office,

It was now completely dark outside and the castle was silent which signalled it must be after curfew. He arrived at the gargoyle a short time later.

'Lemon Drops,' he said.

The gargoyle sprung open and Anton rushed up the stairs and knocked on the door.

'Come in,' the voice of Dumbledore called.

Anton pushed the door open and saw the headmaster sitting at his desk, Dumbledore looked at him expectantly.

'What can I help you with Anton?' he asked.

'I was hoping to leave the school this weekend,' Anton replied 'there are some things I need to take care of.'

'When do you want to set off?' Dumbledore said sitting up straight as he listened to his Defence teacher.

'I suppose now would be good,' Anton said seriously 'I'd be back at Sunday at the latest.'

'It's half past three in the morning,' Dumbledore said looking slightly alarmed 'is something so badly wrong you can't wait until the morning?'

'It could wait,' Anton conceded 'but I would like to get going as soon as possible.'

'I'm going to ask you to wait until tomorrow morning when it's light,' Dumbledore said calmly 'and by then you'll be able to get some sleep and Severus will have prepared some more potions for you to take with you, I'm sure he will bemoan you disrupting the times you are supposed to take it.'

'I think I can live with that,' Anton responded nodding 'first thing in the morning then I'm going.'

'Do you need assistance?' Dumbledore asked not happy about what was happening.

'I can manage on my own,' Anton replied.

'Do you need transport to get you to your location?'

'I'll fly,' Anton said making his way to the door 'and I'll apparate once I get outside the barriers.'

Anton didn't spend the time he had before morning sleeping, but instead preparing for his trip. He took a black satchel and dropped assorted weapons into it along with an emergency aid kit and some pain relief potions just in case anything unfortunate happened. Pyra was next to him watching with interest as he packed the bag and then she whined slightly.

'I can't take you with me,' he said gently taking a minute and stroking her head 'you're an amazing salamander but I doubt you can stay on the back of my Firebolt as I'm travelling.'

She growled softly but Anton ignored her, he had more important things to do than nurse the wounded pride of his pet.

'I'll be back really soon,' he promised.

Pyra turned her back on him and walked over to her bed, curling up on it she didn't look at him once.

Sighing in frustration Anton turned back to what he was doing.

He waited until seven the next morning before he eventually set off, he was wearing black, tough fabric trousers with a black top and his thick black travelling cloak, as usual he had he had his dragonhide boots on and his black hair was tied at the nape of his neck. The only colour that was even slightly visible was the pendent around his neck, the black satchel was slung across his chest and his broom was clasped in his hand, his sword stuck out above his shoulders in its sheath.

'If these are kept warm constantly and are taken at exactly the right times then my potion skills may not be entirely wasted,' Snape said.

'I appreciate it,' Anton said taking the potions vial which were magically heated continuously. He placed them in his satchel and mounted his broom before looking back at the headmaster and the potions teacher 'I'll be back as soon as possible.'

'Be careful Anton,' Dumbledore said his beard glowing in the growing light.

'I'll try,' Anton replied pushing off from the ground.

He flew high into the air the wind whipping past him as he zoomed forward, as he looked back the two teachers had become small pricks on the steps of the castle.

He flew quickly and in a couple of seconds he had cleared the wards of Hogwarts, while he had stayed up he had done some more research and armed with the name of the Gaunt house he had discovered that there were wards around the area that immediately signalled to Voldemort that a wizard had apparated nearby to his Horcrux. Thus meaning that Anton was forced to fly- not that he particularly minded he had just hoped to get it all done much faster than it was currently progressing.

Anton flew for hours, the sun was high in the sky and it was a cloudless day with hardly any wind buffeting him, he passed over fields and trees as well as cities and lakes.

Dusk was setting in by the time Anton neared the old house, he turned his broom downwards and landed softly on the country lane with its overgrown hedgerows on either side, he went to a gap in the hedge and walked along a narrow dirt track where the hedgerows had grown almost out of control. Hurrying down the rocky path it soon opened up to copse. Ahead the house was almost invisible in the thick tangle of trees, moss covered the walls and tiles were missing from the roof displaying some of the rafters.

Anton climbed through the high nettles and up to the front door ignoring the grime covered windows. The high trees blocked out any

moonlight leaving the house in complete darkness, Anton adjusted his eyes allowing him to see in the gloom. The rough front door had a big nail imbedded in the middle.

Anton turned on his sight to detect magic, sure enough the front door glowed with this use of sight, turning it off he pulled his wand out of its holster and touched it to the wood it throbbed as power radiated from the door.

‘Finite Incantatum,’ he murmured.

A spell burst from the tip of the wand and was immediately absorbed by whatever was blocking the door. Pulling a face Anton stepped backwards and summoned a huge charge of fire, throwing it at the door it burst it open in an explosion of noise, the spell guarding the door was blown towards Anton in a black murky cloud, he quickly threw up a shield to block the spell, it crashed into his shield in a wave of power and was blown back off it.

Anton lowered his shield headed cautiously to the door, there was a combined kitchen and living room with two doors leading off it. A filthy ancient armchair was next to a ash filled fireplace and cobwebs hung to dirty pots in the kitchen and on the stone walls.

Anton passed to one of the doors and nudged it open, two old beds were the only furniture in the room, each with ripped grimy grey sheets strewn over them, a huge influx of power was radiating from under one of them.

‘Mobiliarbus,’ Anton waved his wand and the bed shattered as it was thrown against the wall.

With the bed gone the thick dust covered floors were exposed, Anton studied the floorboards. One floorboard was coated in several dark curses that leeches any goodness out of the room instantly.

Anton dropped to his knees and gently pried the wooden board away from the others, beneath a black haze blocked the top of the hollow simmering in an ominous way.

Anton edged closer to the hole to see the enchantments more clearly, almost immediately one of the spells whipped out and slashed Anton across his wrist leaving a deep gash that oozed thick blood.

Anton swore loudly his voice breaking through the crystallised quiet with a sudden jolt, he hopped backwards and fired a spell he had picked up in the future at the dark haze. The force of the purple spell exploded against the vapour and one of the curses imploded in on itself leaving two curses left protecting what was now unmistakably a golden box.

A ghostly snake uncurled itself from the black mist, it was long and thick and it raised its head slowly like it was waking up after a long sleep.

‘Password?’ it hissed.

Anton thought as fast as he could, it couldn’t be Nagini as she hadn’t been around when he had sealed the Horcrux, it also couldn’t be Riddle as he hated his muggle name with a passion.

‘Password?’ it hissed again more angrily rising its wraithlike form higher.

‘...pureblood...’ Anton said cautiously taking a guess.

‘Password...’ the snake hissed ‘is incorrect.’

‘Oh hell!’ Anton cursed as the snakes globular eyes glowed a viscous green colour.

The green discharged from the serpent’s eyes and shot towards Anton who barely managed to jump out the way in time, the curse smashed into the wall behind Anton and blew a huge chunk out, the damaged stonework crashed to the floor and the snakes eyes began to glow green again.

‘Avada Kedavra’s!’ Anton shouted in disbelief ‘he equipped a ghost snake with the ability to shoot death from its eyes! What I wouldn’t

give to be invisible.' he seethed distractedly tugging on the pendent around his neck as he thought this.

The snake's eyes began to dim in colour and it slowly began to withdraw back into the hole.

'Enemy destroyed,' it hissed 'password- Merope- still safe.'

Anton gazed at the snake in shock as to why it had stopped its attack, he lifted his arm and noticed with utter shock that it was as if it was a shadow and then he realised- he was invisible. He took his hand away from the pendant and immediately the snake rose back up and hissed.

'Password?'

'Merope,' Anton said quickly.

'Password...' the snake hissed 'is correct.'

It vanished in a puff of silver smoke and Anton was left wondering exactly how Dumbledore had managed to get past the snake when he had gone after the Horcrux.

Anton scrambled back over to the open floorboard and leant over it, the golden box glinted up at him temptingly and after checking for more curses he picked it up slowly, sitting back on his haunches he prised the lid off.

The gold band of the ring with its black stone glittered, Anton suddenly had an indescribable urge to put the ring on, he lifted it carefully out of the box and went to put it on his finger the twinkling jewel was amazing with its magical inscribed symbol.

The image of Dumbledore's withered arm flashed suddenly into his mind and he dropped the ring in surprise. His mind cleared instantly and he mentally punched himself at his stupidity now he remembered he noticed the incredibly powerful compulsion charm that was clinging to the ring.

‘Finite Incantatum,’ he pointed his wand cancelling the spell.

The fatal curse was still hanging thickly on the ring but the desire to put it on was gone. Anton bent down and retrieved it from the floor ignoring the aura of evilness that clung heavily.

No simple spell would rid this curse so Anton placed his wand in-between both of his hands and taking a deep breath he summoned magic from his core directly. It was like a rush of energy bursting from his insides, it was channelled down the wand in an eruption of raw magical force, it came in a deep red stream and enveloped the ring.

Power surged from the ring as it recognised an attack and Anton’s power fought back equally as forceful, with an extra push from Anton he pressed more magic from his core and into the fight against the ring.

With an ear shattering crash the magic dispelled and Anton fell to his knees in exhaustion, struggling over to the ring he picked it up and saw the huge crack running down the centre of it. Smiling he slipped it safely onto his finger and pushed himself from the floor.

When an Anton eventually staggered from the house he reached inside his satchel and pulled some pepper-up potion out, drinking it down he followed it with the black potion and then wrapped a small bandage around his wrist to stop the blood and after drinking another pepper-up potion he clambered onto his broom and pushed off into the black sky.

Chapter Sixteen

The sun was beginning to set by the time Anton saw the turrets of Hogwarts and he internally breathed a sigh of relief, he was shattered and had nearly fallen asleep mid-flight on a few occasions. The relief gave him an extra spurt of energy and he zoomed towards the courtyard as fast as he could, he was going so fast he almost didn't pull up in time.

Next to falling off his broom, Anton couldn't even be bothered to lift it back off the ground so he simply dragged it up to the main door and waving his wand they opened. He walked through them slowly, loud voices and laughter sounded from the hall which meant the whole school was occupied with dinner so Anton stumbled up the stairs to his room.

When he eventually yawned the password out Pyra was waiting expectantly in front of his bedroom door. Anton didn't even have the energy to greet her properly he simply patted her head slightly and mumbled hello ignoring her glare. Staggering into his bedroom he collapsed onto his bed face first and not bothering to get undressed he closed his eyes and drifted off to sleep.

When Anton's alarm went off the next morning at seven am (the first time he'd ever slept up to it) he still felt wiped-out, instead of standing he simply rolled off the bed and landed with a painful thump on the floor. Groaning Anton unwillingly forced his aching eyes open and pushing himself up he walked unsteadily into his bathroom and blasted himself with the shower before staggering back out and grabbing plain black robes and his boots with the pendant resting on the top.

He also didn't fail to notice that the fire-stone was no longer a deep vibrant red but a dull murky colour. His eyes were not just flecked with red in the iris but the white of the eye was shot through with red he also looked extremely pale and drawn with bags under his bloodshot eyes.

He pulled the dirty bandage off of his wrist and looked at the wound beneath, bending his wrist he reopened the slash and caused it to start bleeding again, sighing in frustration Anton got a fresh bandage and wound it tightly around the lesion keeping his wrist and palm stiff and straight.

A lot of students were already sitting at their house tables and Anton could feel their gazes on him as he walked tiredly to the teachers table he also saw Dumbledore watching him closely as he slumped in the chair next to Snape's.

'I trust my time was not wasted when I prepared those potions for you,' Snape said silkily 'am I to believe you actually drank them?'

'Of course I drank them,' Anton said irritably adding mentally 'well most of them.'

'Because I would hate to think that I was dragged awake in the early hours of the morning to supply you with potions you didn't use,' Snape continued.

'I drank them,' Anton snapped.

Snape raised one eyebrow in obvious disbelief and pointed to a fresh goblet of the potion before turning to his breakfast.

Even though Anton had not eaten since he had left for his search hunger eluded him so he concentrated more on attempting to down the foul concoction.

'Anton could I have a word with you in my office before your first lesson,' Dumbledore asked in a way that Anton knew it wasn't really a question.

'Of course Headmaster,' Anton replied swilling the potion 'I have a first year class but I don't think they'd mind if I was late.'

Anton was standing in the Headmasters office while Dumbledore sat behind his desk studying him carefully.

‘Was your journey successful?’ Dumbledore asked curiously.

‘It definitely worked out well,’ Anton admitted.

‘I see you’ve gained a ring.’ Dumbledore said suddenly making Anton lurch in surprise at his perceptiveness.

‘You recognise it?’ Anton said taking it off of his finger and handing it to the older man, he blamed his exhaustion on the reason he’d been foolish enough to leave it on.

‘Of course,’ Dumbledore nodded taking the ring ‘this is Voldemort’s, he wore it when he was a student here, but the damage to it is new.’

Anton made a snap decision and sat down in a chair opposite Dumbledore.

‘Have you heard of Horcuxes?’

‘Yes,’ Dumbledore said his whole demeanour changing at the mention of them.

‘You probably suspect that this is how Voldemort managed to survive,’ Anton prompted.

‘I started to suspect it months ago,’ Dumbledore admitted his eyes cold as he thought of it ‘I’ve been working on clues as to where Tom might have stored them.’

‘I’m a little ahead of you,’ Anton said softly ‘we found out what they were and where they were, but the drawback is that Ofelia knows as well, and it won’t be long until she tells Voldemort what’s happening and then we’re in serious trouble.’

‘Do you know how many there are?’ Dumbledore asked seriously.

‘Seven,’ Anton answered ‘one was the diary Harry destroyed, another was this ring, Voldemort also put them in Helga Hufflepuff’s cup, Slytherin’s locket, Ravenclaw’s Diadem and in Nagini his snake.’

‘That’s only six,’ Dumbledore said taking in what Anton was saying.

‘I’m not sure where the other one is,’ Anton lied he also didn’t mention that technically there were eight because he had the identical section of soul in him that Harry had- even though his scar was gone the power of it still remained.

Anton yawned as Dumbledore processed the information.

‘You know where they are?’ Dumbledore smiled slightly.

Anton smirked ‘we put a lot of year’s worth of effort into finding them, the next step is destroying them.’

‘You destroyed this one,’ Dumbledore paused fingering the ring ‘is that the reason your magical reserves are dangerously low?’

‘How did you...?’ Anton started before he looked down at his locket ‘oh.’

‘Maybe you should take the day off or at least let Madam Pomfrey check you over.’

‘I’m fine,’ Anton insisted ‘I’m also not going to let my fight with the Voldemort affect my teaching.’

Anton made it to his classroom with only fifteen minutes left, as well talking in depth to Dumbledore he’d also had to take some energy potions to keep him awake through the day.

The class was in uproar with screams and giggling echoing into the corridor through the open door, Anton fingered the pendant around his neck before deciding to scare his third years with a small trick.

Anton walked invisibly through the classroom avoiding getting hit by flailing arms of random people and the kicking legs of a Gryffindor boy jumping on a desk. He went up to his own desk which had the chair pulled out and a Ravenclaw perched on the table facing the class shouting loudly.

Anton sat down softly in the chair and quietly put his feet up on the desk, folding his arms he removed the invisibility and waited for the class to notice him. It took a few moments but eventually someone yelled in surprise, what followed was a domino effect.

One by one the first years began noticing him, they scrambled towards their desks dropping bits of parchment on the floor in their rush, the boy messing on the table jumping up and down was so surprised he fell off with a huge crash and a lot of thrashing. The Ravenclaw spun around and when he saw Anton a look of utter horror filled his face that made Anton want to laugh, but instead he just looked questioningly at the child who scrambled off the desk and rushed to his seat.

When silence and stillness finally fell Anton waited a few extra minutes before pulling his legs off the table and standing up.

‘I expected you to show some maturity,’ he said quietly but every student heard ‘yes I am late and I apologize for that, but I expected that while I was talking to the Headmaster I could trust eleven and twelve year olds not to wreak havoc.’

He paused for effect and all the students stared back terrified ‘obviously I was wrong in my assumptions.’

The class quaked as Anton stared at them coldly.

‘Can anyone tell me why?’

No one moved and one small first year let out a slight whimper.

‘What to do,’ Anton mused ‘what to do...’

Everyone sat up a little straighter in their seats as they waited terrified of what Anton would do, the bell rang out loudly but nobody moved and their eyes stayed riveted on their teacher.

‘You all have two options,’ Anton continued ‘you can either do a two foot long essay on proper behaviour in a classroom or...you can serve detention with me, the choice is yours.’

They all stared terrified, none of them wanted to serve detention with Anton. Malfoy hadn’t said anything about the detention he had done but people had seen him scramble out of the forest followed by Anton and people had seen his nervous form being escorted to the Defence Against the Dark Arts teachers office, however no one had the courage to actually mention it to him.

‘Well?’ Anton prompted.

‘Essay,’ a Gryffindor girl stammered out into the silence.

‘Wise decision,’ Anton inclined his head and the girl went white ‘Now who here would like to make the same choice?’

Twenty hands shot into the air.

‘Class dismissed,’ Anton snapped ‘I want all the essays in by next lesson and if they are so much as an inch short you will all be serving detention.’

They grabbed their bags and ran from the room all looking scared stiff, the seventh years coming into the classroom raised eyebrows at the tearful faces. When they saw Anton’s frosty expression they all entered quietly.

Anton rubbed his sore eyes and tapping the board he started the lesson.

That night his dreams were vivid and real, flashbacks of true events.

They had fought strongly from the beginning, with every single person dedicated to the destruction of Voldemort.

Flashback

The Great Hall was bursting with people, all of the Light wizards in Britain were standing shoulder to shoulder in complete silence.

They were nervous, anyone with even slight empathy could see it but there was also a feeling of great hope within the ranks the people reverberated with an anxious energy as they waited expectantly.

Harry (Anton), Ron (Rhoan), Ginny (Gia) and Hermione (Ofelia) were standing near the front, they were only just seventeen with Ginny still sixteen and they were still using their real names.

Dumbledore stood on a small platform his aura radiating out with power

'Friends' he spoke into the silence his voice resonating and filling each witch and wizard with courage.

'We are gathered because we are the ones who will defeat Voldemort, without us the Light will fall. But as we are united within, we will not crumble in the face of this evil!'

The hall exploded with cheers and clapping hands and the four friends looked at each other their faces shining with expectancy all of them in the utter belief that they would defeat Voldemort, they joined in with the applause and young Hermione turned to young Harry.

'We can do this' she breath 'we will be great, we will be powerful.'

'Yeh but it isn't all about the power' Ron cut in giving Hermione funny look 'we're doing this because it's the right thing to do.'

'Well obviously Ron' Hermione said derisively 'we all want to do the right thing...'

Anton jerked awake suddenly the memories still fresh in his mind. He should have suspected something then, Ofelia had been voicing opinions and comments that had sounded familiar in many respects to the Dark Side's ethos's. They had all dismissed it though, none of them had wanted to even dwell on the possibility their closest friend might be corrupt. Even when she had obliterated her parents and sent them to another continent they had continued like normal and carried on pretending everything was okay, maybe in some respects the betrayal had been inevitable.

It had still hurt though.

The next evening Neville stared glumly at the back of the Fat Lady's portrait trying to decide whether to go through it or not.

'What's the matter Nev?' Ron asked curiously.

'I've got a private lesson with Professor Lukyen,' Neville replied miserably 'he's going to help me catch up.'

'Really!' Harry said impressed 'how did you get him to do that?'

'I didn't,' Neville muttered 'he's making me, he said that he's interested in helping people who will become amazing wizards, so think he's got the wrong person.'

'Don't put yourself down,' Hermione said supportively 'if Lukyen said it then he must see something in you.'

'Maybe he's blind,' he sighed 'well he'll realise soon enough when he tries to teach me.'

Neville sighed again and pushed the portrait open, when the portrait swung shut the three friends started talking.

'What do you think of Anton's teaching?' Hermione asked curiously.

'He's miles better than anyone else we've had,' Ron said slouching in a chair 'I couldn't see him releasing Cornish Pixies into a class full of second years.'

'Have you heard the rumours about Malfoy's detention?' Harry said grinning 'supposedly he was close to tears when he stumbled out of the Forest.'

'Well he nearly cried when we went in our first year,' Hermione said putting her homework down 'but I'm more interested in what that potion is that he keeps drinking.'

'Must be important if Snape left his classroom to give it to him,' Ron answered 'or maybe he's poisoning Anton.'

'Professor Snape would not poison another teacher,' Hermione said cynically 'and I don't think Professor Lukyen would be as foolish as to drink poison freely.'

'Why do you think his salamander doesn't burn him?' Harry said thoughtfully 'Hagrid always wears thick gloves when he touches them.'

'I wish he was here and then we could ask him,' Ron growled 'I wonder when he'll be back.'

'He's obviously doing something for the Order,' Harry said quietly 'and I bet that's what Anton was doing last weekend.'

'What do you mean?' Ron asked confused.

'Honestly Ron do use your head,' Hermione said 'he wasn't around all weekend and when he got back he was exhausted and drained, he had a bandage around his wrist and he talked to Dumbledore for most of first period yesterday.'

'How do you know that?' Harry said surprised.

'Jenny Brickly is a first year Gryffindor who was doing an essay last night,' Hermione replied 'I asked her what it was for and she told me

that Professor Lukyen had set them all a two foot long essay because they caused a mini riot when he turned up to the lesson with only ten minutes left and he told them that he had been talking to Dumbledore.'

'He was in a really funny mood yesterday when we had him,' Ron said suddenly 'and he seemed really distracted.'

'I wonder what he was doing,' Harry mused.

Anton marked homework papers while he waited for Neville to arrive he was half expecting the teenager not to come but he knew it was not in Neville's nature at this time to refuse a teachers direct orders.

Sure enough there came a knock on Anton's study door.

'Come in!' he called putting his quill down on the table.

Neville hesitantly pushed the door open and stuck his head in before tentatively sliding his whole body in as well, Anton saw his mouth open slightly as he took in the deep red walls, the contained hurricane and the picture of Anton, Rhoan and Gia.

'Neville,' Anton smiled 'ready to learn?'

'Yes...' Neville trailed off as the silver contraption on Anton's desk whirred and glowed with a deep red colour- Neville had just lied.

'Don't worry Neville,' Anton said standing up 'this can only help you.'

'Sir!' Neville burst out 'I think you're making a mistake choosing me.'

Anton raised an eyebrow 'Neville, you will one day be a great wizard, trust me when I say that. Every single witch and wizard has the potential to be brilliant, but it is up to us whether we choose to take that capability or to ignore it.'

He paused watching Neville's face before he continued 'you are destined for great things Mr Longbottom. You are destined to make your parents proud.'

As soon as Anton said this Neville's eyes lit up slightly and a look of hopefulness filled his face.

'Do you really think so?' he asked uncertainly.

'I wouldn't have said it if I wasn't serious,' Anton replied 'now are you ready to learn?'

'Yes,' Neville said hastily and this time the silver device didn't so much as tremble.

'Excellent,' Anton grinned pulling his wand out of its holster 'now where should we start?'

'Like I said Professor I'm rubbish at most things,' Neville said miserably

'The start then,' Anton nodded 'that's always the best place to get going. Can you do Expelliarmus?'

'Does it have to work?' Neville said quietly.

'That would be an upside,' Anton said before saying soothingly 'don't worry Neville, by the time you leave tonight you will be able to cast the spell.'

Neville pulled his own wand out of his robes and brandished it nervously. Anton raised his own wand and nodded his head at Neville.

'Cast the spell.'

'Expelliarmus!' Neville shouted.

The red beam burst from the wand tip (a first) but instead of disarming Anton it wacked into the black desk, bounced back off and

hit Pyra who hissed angrily jumping up from the floor and blowing a stream off fire into the air before fixing Neville with a glare.

Neville promptly dropped his wand on the floor and took a step backwards.

‘Pyra!’ Anton said sternly ‘stop it.’

The salamander glared at Anton this time before turning her back and slinking from the room- obviously deciding it was safer that remaining in the office.

‘Never mind Neville,’ Anton said readily ‘I’m sure you will do much better on your next go.’

‘You want me to do it again?’ Neville squeaked.

‘Of course,’ Anton said picking up the fallen wand and handing it to its owner ‘we can’t improve if we don’t practise. What you’ve got to remember is to emphasise certain letters in the spell, you don’t just say Expelliarmus you say ExPelliaarrMus! Give it a go.’

‘Expelliarmus,’ Neville said quietly giving his wand a slight flick, as if accepting he wouldn’t be able to cast the spell adequately.

This time it hit Anton’s wand but didn’t knock it from his hand, which made Neville look more downcast,

Anton realised he would have to goad the teenager into the spell and make him passionate about casting spells- one way to get passion was through anger and Anton thought resignedly of what he would have to say.

‘Neville,’ he said his voice slightly harder ‘if I want you to whisper the spell I will tell you to, now do it again or I will be forced to reevaluate what I said earlier.’

Neville’s face took on a look of anger and frustration when Anton suggested he wouldn’t actually be able to make his parents proud.

‘EXPELLIARMUS!’ he yelled incensed thinking of his parents in St Mungo’s and his Grandmothers constant dissatisfaction with him.

The red spell smashed into Anton’s wand and smashed it from his hand in a shower of sparks, Anton’s wrist snapped backwards and he let out a slight curse that Neville didn’t hear as he was staring stunned at what he had just done.

‘Excellent Neville,’ Anton said placing his other hand on the boys shoulder ‘that was a truly excellent spell, if you can remember the emotions you felt when you discharged it and you incorporate that into other spells that you do. In time I think you could be one of the best wizards this world has ever seen.’

Neville looked at Anton completely overwhelmed and what he had done and what Anton had said about him.

‘Sir...’ he gasped out ‘I didn’t...I.’

‘Never be afraid of your talents,’ Anton said cheerfully ‘I think that is enough for tonight and I will see you next week at the same time.’

Neville stammered a thank you and stumbled from the room still with the glazed look on his face.

‘Damn I’m good,’ Anton muttered flexing his wrist tenderly. Neville had managed to sprain it quite effectively, Anton was just thankful that the spell did not mean that Neville’s successful Expelliarmus would not mean he was the rightful owner of Anton’s wand.

Chapter Seventeen

Ofelia apparated to the cave near Hogsmeade and standing at the edge she stared at the distant castle with its glowing lights and if she looked close enough she could just make out the hoops of the Quidditch Pitch in the dark night sky.

Her mouth was set in a thin line as she remembered all the people in the castle who she had already killed once, she wanted something different this time, away from the service to Voldemort. She wanted her own legacy, her own famed power and influence and there was only one person to stand in her way.

She sat down on the filthy ground her blue silk robes rumpled in the dirt, she ignored this and crossed her legs. With her Legilimency she reached out to the sleeping castle and to one sleeping person.

He was in his quarters as Ofelia searched him out, at night his Occlumency shields would lower as his mind dreamt. She had been coming to this spot for weeks now just as she had been outside Sirius's house when he had been there, slowly she was burrowing through his shields one small step at a time and leaving little openings for her to return to later.

After he had searched for her using the scrying bowl he had opened a small floodgate to his mind which she was had stepped through instantly creating more openings for herself before he had had the presence of mind to knock her back out. The damage unbeknown to him had been high and what would have been months of work was done in those precious seconds.

His shields were good though and it would take more work from her before she was able to gain access to his mind while he slept and then- Game Over.

Anton snapped awake quite suddenly, the feeling of ants scurrying in his mind was back and he shook it heavily to get rid of the sensation.

Pyra sensing he was awake hopped onto his bed and placed her front legs on his chest and licked his face with warm fire.

‘If I wasn’t already awake I would be now.’ Anton said reproachfully propping himself up on his elbows.

Pyra whined as if upset or uncomfortable about something, Anton dismissed whatever concerns his pet had and pulled himself out of bed, grabbing his dressing gown he tugged it on, looking at his clock it told him it was just after four in the morning.

‘Come on Pyra.’ Anton said pulling his bedroom door open ‘where shall we go?’

Pyra scampered through the door in front of Anton and ran to the main door with Anton following her with his feet bare and his hair loose around his face, as he glanced at the hand he had used to push his door open, his wrist was bruised purple and yellow where Neville’s spell had it, and it was the same wrist that has been cut by the curse in his search for the Horcrux. Anton shook the sleeve to cover it and left his quarters.

They walked along the candlelit corridors in silence with Anton revelling in being able to walk through the halls at night without running the risk of being caught and either placed in detention or losing house points.

They wandered aimlessly through the school without any real direction and Anton was half tempted to turn back to his quarters when a muffled yell caught his ears. He swept towards the origin of the yell drawing his wand as he went.

The source of the shout was on the sixth floor in a dark classroom, angry voices were coming from inside it.

Filch ran around the corner at the end of the corridor and hobbled wheezing up to Anton.

‘Students out of bed!’ he said a sadistic happiness coming into his eyes ‘I’ve caught the hooligans this time!’

'After you then,' Anton said with faked politeness standing back from the door.

The caretaker burst through the classroom door to exclamations of surprise from inside. Anton smirked and followed Filch inside.

Looks of utter dismay and horror flickered over the faces of three seventh years Anton recognised vaguely.

'Well this is unusual,' Anton said dryly 'students actually arriving early for lessons.'

The two girls and one boy looked possibly even more appalled.

'It's after four in the morning,' Anton continued 'which even for prefects is long past curfew, care to explain what you are doing?'

One girl shook her head.

'You don't care to explain,' Anton said his voice dangerously icy 'then let me rephrase. What are you doing?'

'We were...' the boy trailed off looking at the other two for help, he looked back at Anton fearfully when they didn't help him.

'What house are you in?'

'They're in Hufflepuff,' Filch answered Anton happily 'little blighters are in so much trouble, if only I was still allowed to use the thumbscrews-then they'd scream.'

'Thank you Mr Filch,' Anton interrupted 'I think if you are unwilling to tell me then...'

Anton stopped mid-sentence as he spotted a piece of parchment being concealed behind the second girls back.

'Give it here,' he ordered the girl.

She hesitantly pulled it out and handed it trembling to Anton. Anton flicked his eyes over it and his mouth nearly fell open as he recognised what it was, or more what it contained.

‘Have you any idea the damage you could cause with this’ he said staring at the three seventh years in horror ‘what possessed you?’

The second girl who had been shaking slightly began to cry as she recognised the amount of trouble she was in.

‘I think this is a matter better left for the Headmaster to deal with,’ Anton said finally ‘now get back to your rooms this instant.’

They ran from the classroom all of them happy to get away but terrified of what would happen to them the next morning. Anton turned to the caretaker who looked put-out that he had not been able to issue detentions.

‘Professor Dumbledore is the only one who will be able to deal with those’ he said calmly still internally trying to process what the sixth years had been doing.

Turning on his heel he left the classroom and hurried to Dumbledore’s office.

‘What can I do for...Anton what’s wrong?’ Dumbledore asked concerned as he saw the expression on his face and the late hour.

‘Take a look at this,’ Anton said passing him the piece of parchment.

Dumbledore took the paper and stared at it for a couple of seconds before looking back at Anton his eyes hard and his mouth set firm.

‘Where did you get it?’

‘Three Hufflepuff Seventh years,’ Anton replied dropping into a chair opposite Dumbledore ‘they were in a classroom on the sixth floor about fifteen minutes ago.’

‘Of all the misconceived ideas,’ Dumbledore murmured rubbing his eyes ‘why would three of my students start spying for the ministry?’

The next morning as soon as breakfast had finished Dumbledore summoned the three Hufflepuffs to his office along with Professor Sprout and Professor McGonagall.

Anton passed them as he made his way to teach his third years. All three of the teachers looked both angry and disappointed at the three students who trailed miserably behind them, all of them looking as if they had barely slept the night before.

Anton shook his head internally and walked into his classroom where the students snapped instantly to attention.

‘It is time to switch our attention to Grindylow’s,’ Anton said walking to his desk and pulling the cloth of a tank that was positioned there ‘Professor Hagrid was able to catch this from last year and Professor Grubbly-Plank has lent it to me to show you. Now does anywhere know where Grindylow’s inhabit in this castle?’

‘Aren’t there some in the Lake?’ Dennis Creevey said enthusiastically.

‘Yes there are quite a few in the Lake,’ Anton agreed ‘Grindylow’s are vicious creatures but not what we’d class as dangerous, though they are certainly not to be taken lightly, if there are enough of them they can cause quite a lot of harm.’

That lunchtime Anton followed a message sent by the Headmaster and went to his office.

‘Come in Anton,’ Dumbledore said not sounding his usual self ‘there is information that needs to be told.’

‘The seventh years?’ Anton asked gratuitously.

Dumbledore nodded sombrely 'They were in no uncertain terms blackmailed. Parents careers and there own futures were threatened by individual ministry members.'

'They were that determined?' Anton said quietly.

'Cornelius was extremely put out that he failed to get Madam Umbridge positioned within the school,' Dumbledore replied stroking his beard 'but I never suspected he would go to these lengths to obtain information.'

'What's going to happen to the students?'

'They were blackmailed,' Dumbledore said simply 'they deserve a second chance, which is more than I can say for the people responsible.'

'What are you going to do about the Ministry?'

'I believe I need to speak with the minister.' Dumbledore replied 'if he is determined who knows how many other families have been threatened or who are still at risk of being intimidated by the Minister.'

The next few weeks passed quickly by, with regular lessons with Neville he was definitely improving in confidence and skill. Dumbledore had spoken to Fudge in private and afterwards he assured the staff that Fudge was not going to blackmail any other students, yet everybody knew that Fudge would not be satisfied for long by whatever Dumbledore had said to momentarily pacify him.

Hagrid reappeared in November supporting the memorable injuries and undoubtedly hiding his half-brother in the forest. Anton had intended to go and speak to the man but he never seemed to find the time to go.

Anton drummed his fingers impatiently across his desk every so often he would stare out of the window. The fifth years he was teaching were making notes on Dark Curses from the nineteenth century and more than a few of them kept looking at Anton as he gazed distractedly out.

‘Professor?’ Hermione said tentatively

‘Sorry Hermione did you say something?’ Anton said snapping his attention to the teenager.

‘I’ve finished the work,’ Hermione replied nervously.

‘Right,’ Anton said making the class jump when he leaped up from his chair and stood in front of them ‘Quills down that’s enough note taking for one lesson!’

The class dropped their quills as quickly as possible not wanting Anton to change his mind.

‘As there is quite a bit of time left I think it would be more productive if we learnt some defensive spells’ Anton said twirling his wand ‘in particular countering the Endarios curse, somebody tell me what the curse is!’

Hands lifted into the air and Anton picked one ‘Miss Parkinson, if you will.’

‘The Endarios curse removes all the bones it comes in contact with, but leaves the skin and muscle completely intact,’ she replied snootily.

‘A very precise description,’ Anton conceded ‘and like all good curses it comes with a good blocking curse, if you were to implement a normal or strong shield it would not stand up against...’

Anton trailed off mid-sentence and glanced back out of the window, the feeling he usually experienced on waking up was happening in the middle of the afternoon, the feeling that someone was gnawing at his mind slowly.

Anton shook his head irritably and checked his shields were at their strongest force. The class began muttering slightly, Anton shrugged and continued with what he was saying.

‘The shield would not stand up against the curse and the victim would be hit with the full force, undoubtedly as the victim would be standing in centre of the spells path their ribcage would be removed and from there the wizard would die instantly or one small jab could destroy them. Spells do not have to be intended for death for them still to kill.’

The class shifted restlessly for a few moments.

‘Obviously I will not be teaching you this curse,’ Anton smiled slightly ‘but I will be teaching you the spell Teractus, which will block the curse if enough emotion is put into the counter, though if the spell is coming at you I have no doubt that you will be very emotional and driven.’

Anton drew his wand from his holster ‘you make a stabbing gesture with your wand’ he said calmly acting out what he was saying ‘you then pronounce the spell clearly with force.’

He made the stabbing motion and cried ‘Teractus!’

A blue web surged from the wand tip growing as it swelled outwards in a circular shape at least a metre in diameter.

‘Concentration is the key,’ Anton stated before glancing back out of the window where the first flakes of winter were beginning to fall, it was obvious to the waiting class that he was distracted by something.

The fifth years all stared silently at their teacher wondering if they should do something, Anton turned his head back to his class and snapped his fingers.

‘Right I want you all to have a go at the spell,’ Anton ordered rubbing his eyes absent-mindedly.

The students pulled their wands out and began attempting the spell. Anton turned back to the window and gazed back out at snow flurry that was storming down on the grounds of Hogwarts.

Anton stared at the left over potion lying cold in the bottom of the goblet, Pyra whined and Anton realised she had been doing it in increasing amounts lately.

‘What’s the matter girl?’ he said crouching down and running his fingers across the top of her blazing head.

Pyra whimpered slightly and lifting her paw she pointed out of the window and shivered faintly.

‘I know,’ Anton whispered in her ear ‘I don’t think we’ll be going out anytime soon.’

Pyra snapped at him as he misunderstood what she was getting at and jabbed her front paw again.

‘That’s lovely Pyra,’ Anton said vaguely rubbing her head and standing back up to scrutinize the class all of which were trying hard to learn the spell. He also failed to notice the looks of curiosity coming from Harry, Hermione and Ron who were interested into why their teacher was so obviously distracted.

As Anton had been watching the first snow beginning to drop from the sky Ofelia had been standing directly in the middle of it revelling in the power, like Anton hated water and cold, she hated heat and fire which meant she was strongest in the winter and Anton was strongest in the summer. Rhoan/Ron and Gia/Ginny had been far less affected by the seasons but it had been noticed that Gia had preferred spring when the flowers and trees blossomed and flourished and Rhoan had enjoyed autumn with its blustery weather.

She was getting close to succeeding in her well made plans, she was literally inches from her goal. On top of that she was putting the

finishing touches on another plot that was surely going to shake things up for the light wizards.

Anton couldn't concentrate, he was staring without really seeing at the four house tables filled with students.

'Are you intending to eat that or just to let it form a congealed mess on the end of your fork?' a snide voice said from beside him jerking him back into reality.

Anton turned his head slowly to Snape who was staring at him with his own meal nearly finished compared to Anton's who's plate was barely touched. Anton placed his fork back on his plate.

'I have a really peculiar feeling that something bad is going to happen fairly soon,' Anton said quietly.

'God forbid you have a peculiar feeling,' Snape sneered 'next you'll be visiting Trelawney in her tower and reading tealeaves together.'

Anton allowed a small smile to flicker across his face at Snape's pronouncement.

On the Gryffindor table the three teens had been joined by Ginny and the four of them were watching the teachers table.

'What's Lukyen doing?' Ron asked after a while 'he's been looking like that for the last fifteen minutes.'

They all watched as Snape said something with a snide expression on his face that made Anton jerk in surprise and stare at Snape.

'What do you think has gone wrong?' Harry asked curiously.

'What makes you say something's gone wrong?' Hermione said reasonably 'he could be distracted for any number of reasons.'

'He spent most of my lesson watching the snow fall,' Ginny announced knocking Ron's arm out of the way as he reached for the last bread roll in the middle of the table.

'Well he's obviously distracted by something' Hermione said staring at Anton as he responded to Snape, who in his own reply gave Anton one of his rare smirks that bordered on an actual smile.

As Harry opened his mouth to say something else, the subject of their conversation rose from his chair and clicking his fingers he left the teachers table with Pyra scuttling behind him keeping close to the hem of his blood red robe.

The professor didn't look up as he hurried past by the four teenagers, he just rubbed his hand perplexedly through his loose hair and continued to the doors.

Looking back at the table they saw Dumbledore watching Anton's retreating form with a look of slight concern, Madam Pomfrey even went as far as to lean to the aged man and mutter something to him. The headmaster merely shook his head at whatever she had said and went back to his own meal.

When Anton reached his quarters he paced the living room with a restless energy, he in addition heated his skin up as if he had just stepped from the shower, the difference being he wasn't wet and no matter how much heat he added he couldn't seem to shake the coldness that clung to him in a suffocating manner.

Stopping suddenly, Anton stared out of his window and into the swirling snow, it reminded him of Ron and Hermione. Not Ofelia and Rhoan, but of Ron and Hermione. The wind that buffeted the frozen water was eerily reminiscent of his two best friends, beyond the churning blizzard the trees of the forest swayed as if dancing to a silent tune, a subtle reminder of Ginny.

All three of them were out there, but he wasn't, he was inside, unable to put his past where it truly belonged.

In the past.

Chapter Eighteen

'Professor Lukyen!' a voice next to shouted down his ear.

Anton stared confusedly at Professor McGonagall who had just barked at him.

'The headmaster,' she informed him from her seat beside him in the staffroom 'just asked you if there was anything you would like to add.'

'To the meeting?' Anton asked still feeling bleary from the poor night's sleep he'd had, and indeed most of nights in the last few weeks.

'Well that would be helpful seeing as this is a staff meeting,' Snape said languidly and without any real malice.

'Severus.' Dumbledore said calmly 'Now Anton, is there anything you would like to say?'

'No,' Anton said blinking to dispel some cobwebs 'no there isn't anything.'

'Then I believe that concludes this meeting,' Dumbledore said rising from his seat a movement echoed by most of the staff.

Anton stared at the clock in surprise, it had seemed like seconds ago he had sat down in his chair and now the meeting was over and half an hour had passed.

Anton rose from his own seat slowly and was about to leave when Dumbledore stopped him.

'A word Anton, if you wouldn't mind.'

Dumbledore waited until the last teacher had left the staffroom before speaking.

'Anton is there anything you would like to speak to me about?' he asked surveying Anton carefully over his half moon spectacles 'it has not gone unnoticed that you have been preoccupied lately.'

Anton debated internally whether to tell the headmaster everything, who he really was, why he was here, who Ofelia was and why he was so distracted

'No,' Anton said eventually 'there isn't anything I can think of, I think it's just the weather getting me down.'

'Anton, Madam Pomfrey has voiced her concerns that you are looking unwell,' Dumbledore continued 'I would like you to go and see her at some point.'

Anton nodded his head in answer, he didn't intend to go to the nurse, she couldn't tell him anything he didn't already know.

Dumbledore waited for a few moments giving Anton the opportunity to say something. When Anton didn't respond Dumbledore sighed slightly and bidding Anton a good day he left the room.

The weekend wasn't coming soon enough for Anton, his students were starting to notice how distracted he was. On Tuesday evening Anton watched as most of the students emptied out onto the grounds for a snowball fight, quite a few teachers went to both supervise and join in. one thing that did make him smile was watching Professor's Vectra and Sprout hide behind a snow fort wrapped up with scarves and hats.

Anton had been content with wandering around the castle but two people (he assumed the twins) had enchanted a pile of snowballs to attack the people who had refused to become involved. Because of this Anton hastened to his quarters where Pyra had refused to leave earlier that morning, this may have had something to do with how cold certain area's of the castle actually were.

Anton sat at his desk that was heaped with books, he should have really been marking but he was too preoccupied searching for the Horcruxes, he was completely unsure as to why Ofelia wasn't

protecting them, he couldn't shake the feeling she had an ulterior motive.

Anton pulled open an ancient book on the four founders and studied the miniscule script.

'Rowena Ravenclaw was the only founder who possessed a diadem, the diadem was stolen by her daughter Helena in an attempt to become more intelligent. Helena fled to Albania and hid the diadem in a hollow of a tree. When she died she became the Ravenclaw house ghost known as the Grey Lady...'

Anton skimmed the rest of the chapter quickly, he passed over the section on Gryffindors sword and revised the bit on Salazar's locket. When he had gone to get it the first time he had discovered that it had been replaced with a fake, he just needed now to find out where Kreacher was, in the future the elf had been killed and the location of the locket had remained lost, he pondered how he was going to do this as he couldn't exactly just ask Sirius where Kreacher was, as supposedly he had never met the elf.

When Anton looked up from what he was doing the sun had long set and he hadn't realised because he had unconsciously turned his night vision on in his eyes, as he stopped he realised Pyra was grumbling none to graciously for food.

'I'm sorry Pyra,' Anton said stroking the backs of her ears 'I lost track of time.'

Pyra looked understandably unimpressed. And it was then Anton also realised he hadn't had any potions all day and he was starting to feel slightly nauseous. Anton looked at the clock to find it was five minutes to dinner, he felt an absolute mess so he had a quick shower and pulled on plain black robes, he also tucked the pendant into the neck as he didn't want Dumbledore to see its dulled colour.

The food had just been served when Anton took his seat at the table.

'I don't brew those potions for my own amusement,' Snape's voice cut in the moment he had sat down 'they are actually supposed to be consumed.'

'I completely forgot about them,' Anton admitted trying to look apologetic.

'Well when you keel over and the Headmaster blames me,' Snape said snidely 'I'll be sure to tell him you simply, forgot.'

Snape clicked his fingers and a much larger goblet appeared in front of him. Anton took it unwillingly and spent most of dinner trying to drink it.

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The nurse seized upon him once dinner was finished, she cornered him in an empty corridor and began berating him on why he hadn't come to see her and why he was looking unwell.

'You have a low immune system,' she scolded waving her finger not noticing that Anton's eyes had glazed over and he wasn't listening to her.

'there are lots of colds going through the school,' she carried on 'it is very important you don't get one, Severus has already told me you are slipping with your potions.'

This statement registered to Anton and he stared incredulously at the nurse

'He told you,' he said in disbelief 'I only missed a couple.'

'A couple!' she exclaimed 'even that is too much...'

Anton lost interest in what she was saying and watched as some of the paintings danced into other frames.

The nurse carried on for a few minutes and all that Anton really noticed was the change in tone as she stressed her points, he was

half tempted to use his pendant and disappear from her sight, but he resisted- barely.

‘So what do you think?’ she asked suddenly.

‘To what?’

‘What I have just been explaining for the last ten minutes’ she answered with forced patience.

‘And what would that be?’ Anton said grimacing.

‘That! Would be you coming for a check up to see how the potions have been helping!’ she replied glaring at him.

‘Sure at some point,’ Anton said vaguely taking a step away from Madam Pomfrey.

‘I meant a specific date and time,’ she said her cheeks reddening in annoyance.

‘I’m sure we’ll be able to work that out later,’ Anton said pensively striding away from the nurse as fast as he could.

‘Professor Lukyen!’ she shouted after him.

Anton ignored her and the threats she was beginning to make and hurried away.

Neville knocked on his door at eight that evening, his confidence had improved so much that he even walked into the centre of the room instead of hovering by the door.

‘Evening Neville’ Anton said cheerfully while internally thinking ‘stay focused!’

‘Evening Sir’ Neville said his face shining ‘we had potions today Professor and it was the potion we went over last week and I got an A!’

‘That is excellent’ Anton smiled at Neville’s happy face (it was no coincidence he had gone over that potion the week before) ‘though I wouldn’t have expected any less.’

Neville beamed possibly even more brightly and Anton decided it would be best to get on with the lesson.

‘Tonight I thought we’d do Accio’- the smile fell off Neville’s face.

‘Don’t worry Neville,’ Anton said encouragingly ‘you got an A in potions, this is going to be a piece of cake.’

Neville managed to look slightly less daunted and pulled his wand.

‘On the count of three then show me what you can do.’

An hour later Neville could successfully make the objects he had his wand pointed at vibrate and shake, even though many wizards would have scorned the boy, Anton praised him as often as possible and egged him on whenever there was a slight improvement.

When he dismissed the teenager his young face was shining once more but Anton suspected he himself looked even more worn out.

That night Anton awoke suddenly as he had been doing many times lately. He checked his Occlumancy shields, they were seemingly in full working order and up to their complete strength yet the feeling that they had been breached still clung to him.

Anton swung himself of his bed, he knew if he tried to get back to sleep he’d just see the faces of those he had lost. Pyra was for once fast asleep sprawled across the bottom of his bed, each time she snored a small lick of fire would dart out of her mouth.

'What is the matter with me?' Anton said rubbing his face with his hands.

Ofelia stood up and waved her wand over herself a couple of time muttering 'Scourgify'

She stared at the turrets of Hogwarts a small smile playing on her face, she was closer than ever, so close she could almost feel Anton's dying breath on his lips.

'Not long now old friend,' she muttered 'not long now.'

Wednesday came with more bad weather but this came in the form of rain which turned the snow into muddy slush, homework was forgotten and warmth was a distant memory to the students hovering by the fires in their common rooms.

Anton spent the evening in the library trying to concentrate (but failing miserably) on lesson plans, he managed to remember to take Snape's potions but spent dinnertime wishing he was anywhere but the Great Hall, especially when he was getting sidelong looks from both the Headmaster and Madam Pomfrey.

In the rush to get out of the hall at the end of dinner Anton used his pendant and in the disarray snuck from the hall before anybody could stop him or ask him annoying questions.

It was coming up to Christmas and Anton was determined to spend the holiday searching for Horcruxes no matter how debilitating the weather was.

He stayed up later that evening and when Anton eventually did turn in for the night he was exhausted. Pyra had chosen for that night to sleep in her bed in the living room, so he was alone when he sank into sleep.

Anton opened his eyes, he was sitting on a warm grassy bank, the sun was high and beating a pleasant heat down, it was iridescent in the deep blue sky and a voice seemed to come from the sparkling goldness. Anton strained to hear what the voice was saying to him, but he couldn't quite hear. Something about the voice called to him deeply, and in an attempt to hear the voice he hesitantly weakened his mind shields knowing it was stupid but unable to see the harm in it.

'Anton,' sang the voice kindly 'Anton where are you?'

'I'm here!' Anton said loudly calling into the sky.

'Come and find me Anton!' the voice cried out 'I'm so lost and alone, come and find me!'

Anton stood up and gazed down the bank, he slowly considered doing what the voice was saying, he really wanted to but something in his mind was telling him it wasn't a good idea.

'Come on Anton,' the voice sang out 'it's not like you're doing anything bad and this is only a dream.'

Unable to resist the temptation Anton stepped forward through the soft grass and once he'd taken one step the voice encouraged him onwards and he found himself almost rushing to take the next.

Something pulled back on his leg as if desperately trying to make him stop, looking down Anton couldn't see anything so he shook his leg attempting to dislodge whatever it was, after he kicked his leg forcefully he found himself free to move again. Taking the opportunity he hurried on down the bank as fast as he could, though even as he did it he couldn't explain why he felt so compelled.

'Come on Anton,' the voice said again 'I'm so close.'

Anton walked faster and faster as the voice led him further and further through the grassy plane, ahead of him a large grey wall loomed up. The surface was rough and crumbling and had ivy

creeping up it, the sight made him feel quite comforted in some odd way reminding him of Ginny and her warm humour.

In the middle of the wall was an archway with a silver gate guarding it, Anton reached the gateway as the ground levelled off and looked closely at the lock that was keeping it shut. Did he really want to open this gate, he wasn't sure, he took a step back.

'Anton!' called the voice and a breeze of soft wind whistled through bars, Anton smiled as he thought of what Rhoan would say of this wisp, he'd laugh and call a hurricane to compare it with.

As if in answer the breeze got stronger and urged him to take a tentative step forward

'Come on Anton,' the voice sang 'I'm so close by.'

Anton raised his hands and slowly unlocked the door and pushed the gate open, it led to more smooth grass and in the distance a bright white light glowed.

'I'm waiting for you Anton,' the voice tempted him 'I'm nearby Anton, come and find me Anton, I'm so alone without you.'

He continued walking noticing that even though the day looked bright and warm his body was cold as if he had stepped into ice from head to toe, he tried to heat his body up and suddenly the air was filled with sobs.

'Stop it Anton,' the voice sobbed quieter than it had been before 'you're hurting me.'

Anton stopped, he didn't know why he had stopped, he normally would have ignored someone telling him what to do, but even as he tried to stop his body seemed to become detached from his mind and it walked him on further into the new landscape and away from the stone wall. It was getting colder and colder for Anton however bright the day looked and how clear the sky was, managing to look down at his arm Anton saw rivulets of water rushing down his arm yet he still couldn't turn back.

Closer and closer he got to the white light and blissful brightness that promised warmth and comfort and still the voice pushed him on.

'Come on Anton,' it sang 'I'm so close you can almost find me.'

Anton dragged a painful breath in that burned his lungs and froze his insides, he was almost reaching the white light.

Another sound came from the sky as if shouting from a great distance but Anton couldn't hear what was being said, all he could hear was the laughing of the voice that had led him to this point as he kept walking, the shout came again.

And then came nothing but darkness.

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Fifteen Minutes Earlier

Pyra was curled up in her bed with her head resting on her front legs, she was gazing at the storm that was howling outside the window and the rain that was happily lashing at the glass panes.

The door of her Masters room creaked open and she pushed herself up expectantly, Anton stepped through it and she bounded over to him flicking her tail and yapping. But Anton stared straight ahead his eyes closed as he walked as if in a trance to the door leading to the third corridor, following him she walked behind him for a few metres as he started towards the stairs she realised something was extremely wrong with her Master, she desperately hooked herself around his leg to try and stop him from moving forward.

He shook the leg she was attached to and through some feat managed to dislodge her, as soon as she was flung away from him, Anton carried on and descended the stairs his movements heavy and sluggish.

Hissing angrily Pyra pulled herself back up and after taking one last look at her master she ran determinedly in one direction.

She reached the stone gargoyle her nails scratching furiously, as if answering her call it slid back and the silvery haired professor stepped out closely followed by the one she recognised as the potions teacher.

‘That’s Anton’s Salamander,’ Snape said looking at Pyra ‘what is it doing here?’

Pyra whined and nudged the Headmaster while being careful not to burn him, then she scampered a few metres away shaking her head towards the staircase, she ran back nudged him again and the coughed fire towards the stairs.

‘I think she wants us to follow her,’ Dumbledore said understanding.

Pyra inclined her head and then scurried down the corridor with Snape and Dumbledore following quickly, they hurried down the Grand Staircase, when they reached the third floor Dumbledore swept towards Anton’s quarters even though Pyra was edging into panic.

Entering the living space Dumbledore called out.

‘Anton! Are you here,’ he said worriedly.

Silence greeted his ears and Pyra whined again.

‘He must have gone somewhere,’ Snape said irritably staring at the older man.

Without replying Dumbledore strode from the room with Pyra scuttling ahead and Snape following.

When they reached the Entrance Hall they immediately noticed the open door leading out of the school and the rain howling in.

‘He wouldn’t go out,’ Snape said aghast ‘that would be suicide for him!’

Pyra ran to the door and blasted fire out into the night.

'I doubt she would be telling us to go that way if he wasn't there,'
Dumbledore said pulling his wand out 'point me,' he muttered.

The point swung to the open door and Dumbledore turned to Snape,

'Coming Severus?'

Snape frowned but nodded and braved the tempest that was roaring.

